THE DUTY and REWARD OF BOUNTY TO THE POOR:

IN A

SERMON

Preached at the

SPITTAL

Upon *Wedneſday* in *Eaſter* Week,

Anno Dom. MDCLXXI.

The ſecond Edition.

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To the Right Honourable

Sir RICHARD FORD,

Lord Mayor of *London*,

AND

The Court of Aldermen.

Right Honourable,

AS out of Grateful Reſpect, I did (although otherwiſe indiſpoſed for ſuch Employments) endeavour to diſcharge that Service, which You vouchſafed to call me unto, in conceiving and uttering theſe Meditations; ſo now in publiſhing them, I do purely ſubmit to Your Commands, meaning therein to approve my ſelf,

Right Honourable,

Your moſt Obedient Servant,

ISAAC BARROW.

Fozd Mayoz.

Martis ſecundo die *Maii*, 1671. Annoq; Domini Regis CAROLI Secundi *Angliæ*, &c. viceſimo tertio.

THis Court doth deſire Dr. Barrow *to Print his Sermon, Preached at the* Spittal *on* Wedneſday *in* Eaſter-*Week laſt, with what farther he had prepared to deliver at that time.*

AVERY.

IMPRIMATUR.

July 3. 1671. *Sam. Parker.*

A SERMON

PREACHED at the

SPITTAL,

UPON

Wedneſday in EASTER-WEEK,

Anno Domini 1671.

Pſal. cxii. 9.

He hath diſperſed, he hath given to the Poor; his Righteouſneſs endureth for ever, his Horn ſhall be exalted with Honour.

AS this whole Pſalm appears to have a double intent; one to deſcribe the proper affections and actions of a truly religious or pious

Verſ. 1. Man, (of a Man *who feareth the Lord, and delighteth greatly in his Commandments*) the other to declare the happineſs of ſuch a Mans ſtate, conſequent upon thoſe his affections and actions, whether in way of natural reſult, or of gracious recompence from God: So doth this Verſe particularly contain both a good part of a pious Mans character, and ſome conſiderable inſtances of his felicity. The firſt words, (*He hath diſperſed, he hath given to the Poor*) expreſs part of his Character; the latter, (*His Righteouſneſs endureth for ever, his Horn ſhall be exalted with honour*) aſſign inſtances of his felicity. So that our Text hath two parts, one affording us good information concerning our Duty, the other yielding great encouragement to the performance thereof; for we are obliged to follow the Pious Mans practice, and ſo doing we ſhall aſſuredly par-

partake of his condition. These parts we shall in order prosecute, endeavouring (by God's assistance) somewhat to illustrate the words themselves, to confirm the Truths couched in them, and to inculcate the Duties which they imply.

For the first part, *He hath dispersed, he hath given to the Poor.* These words in general do import the liberal bounty and mercy, which a Pious Man is wont to exercise; doing which, doth in good part constitute him Pious, and signally declareth him such; is a necessary ingredient of his Piety, and a conspicuous mark thereof: But particularly they insinuate some things concerning the nature, the matter, the manner, and the object of those Acts.

He hath dispersed, he hath given: Those words being put indefinitely, or without determining what is dispersed and given by him,

may be ſuppoſed to imply a kind of univerſality in the matter of his Beneficence; that he beſtoweth whatever he hath within compaſs of his poſſeſſion, or his power; his τὰ ὑπάρχοντα, (the things which he hath) and his τὰ ἐνόντα, (the things which he may) according to the preſcriptions of our Lord in the Goſpel. Every thing (I ſay) which he hath in ſubſtance, or can do by his endeavour, that may conduce to the ſupport of the Life, or the Health, or the welfare in any kind of his Neighbour, to the ſuccour or relief of his indigency, to the removal or eaſement of his affliction; he may well here be underſtood, to diſperſe and give: Feeding the Hungry, cloathing the Naked, viſiting the Sick, entertaining the Stranger, ranſoming the Captive, eaſing the Oppreſſed, comforting the Sorrowful, aſſiſting the Weak, inſtructing or ad-

Luke 12. 33.
Luke 11. 41.

adviſing the Ignorant, together with all ſuch kinds or inſtances of Beneficence, may be conceived either meant directly as the matter of the good Mans diſperſing and giving, or by juſt analogy of Reaſon reducible thereto: Subſtantial Alms, as the moſt ſenſible and obvious matter of Bounty, was ('tis probable) eſpecially intended, but thence no manner of expreſſing it is to be excluded; for the ſame reaſons which oblige us, the ſame affections which diſpoſe us to beſtow our Money, or deal our Bread, will equally bind and move us to contribute our endeavour and advice, for the ſuſtenance and comfort of our poor Neighbour. Anſwerably, our Diſcourſe will more expreſly regard the principal matter, liberal communication of our Goods; but it may be referred to all ſorts of Beneficence.

Far-

Farther, the word *diſperſed*, intimateth the nature of his bounty, in excluſion of practices different from it. He *diſperſeth*, and is therefore not tenacious; doth not hoard up his Goods, or keep them cloſe to himſelf for the gratifying his covetous humour, or nouriſhing his pride, or pampering his ſenſuality, but ſendeth them abroad for the uſe and benefit of others. He *diſperſeth* his Goods, and therefore alſo doth not fling them away altogether, as if he were angry with them, or weary of them, as if he loathed or deſpiſed them; but fairly and ſoftly, with good conſideration he diſpoſeth of them here and there, as reaſon and need do require. He *diſperſeth* them *to the poor*, not diſſipateth them among vain or lewd Perſons in wanton or wicked profuſions, in riotous exceſſes, in idle divertiſements, in expenſive curioſities, in hazardous gam-

gamings; in any ſuch Courſes, which ſwallow whole all that a Man hath, or do ſo cripple him, that he becomes unable to diſperſe any thing: Our good Man is to be underſtood wiſely Provident, honeſtly Induſtrious, and ſoberly Frugal, that he may have wherewith to be Juſt firſt, and then Liberal.

Οὐ γὰρ ὅλον τὸ χρήματα ἔχειν μὴ ἐπιμελούμενον ὅπως ἔχῃ. Ariſt. Eth. 4. 1.

His *diſperſing* alſo (or *ſcattering*, ſo the * *Hebrew* word here uſed, is otherwhere rendred: *There is* (ſaith the Wiſeman) *that ſcattereth, and yet increaſeth.* Where we may remark, That this word ſingly by it ſelf, without any adjunct matter to limit or interpret it, is uſed to ſignifie this kind of Practice; this his *diſperſing* (I ſay alſo) denotes the extent of the pious Mans bounty, that it is very large and diffuſive, and in a manner unreſtrained; that it reacheth to many places, and is with-held from no Perſons within the verge of

* פזר Prov. 11. 24.

of his power, and opportunity to do good. This Practice commonly by a like phraſe (unto which perhaps this word refers) is termed *ſowing*: *He* (ſaith St. *Paul*) *which ſoweth ſparingly, ſhall alſo reap ſparingly; and he which ſoweth bountifully, ſhall alſo reap bountifully.* Now, he that ſoweth, having choſen a good ſoil, and a fit ſeaſon, doth not regard one particular ſpot, but throweth all about ſo much as his hand can hold, ſo far as the ſtrength of his arm doth carry. It is likewiſe called *watering*, (*He that watereth*, ſaith *Solomon*, *ſhall be watered himſelf*;) which expreſſion alſo ſeemeth to import a plentiful and promiſcuous effuſion of good, dropping in ſhowres upon dry and parched places; that is, upon Perſons dry for want, or parched with affliction: So the good Man doth not plant his bounty in one ſmall hole, or ſpout it on one nar-

2 Cor. 9. 6, 10. Gal. 6. 7, 8. Prov. 11. 18.

Prov. 11. 25.

row

row ſpot, but with an open hand diſſeminates it, with an impartial regard diſtils it all about: He ſtints it not to his own Family or Relations; to his Neighbours, or Friends, or Benefactors; to thoſe of his own Sect and Opinion, or of his humour and diſpoſition; to ſuch as ſerve him, or oblige him, or pleaſe him; whom ſome private intereſt ties, or ſome particular affection endears him to; but ſcatters it indifferently and unconfinedly toward all Men that need it; toward meer ſtrangers, yea, toward known Enemies; toward ſuch who never did him any good, or can ever be able to do any; yea, even toward them who have done evil to him, and may be preſumed ready to do more. Nothing in his Neighbour but abſence of need, nothing in himſelf but defect of ability, doth curb or limit his Beneficence in that προθυμία (that proclivity and promp-

2 Cor. 8. 12. promptitude of mind) which St. *Paul* ſpeaketh of, he doth good every where; where-ever a Man is, there is a room for his wiſhing well, and doing good, if he can: he obſerves that Rule of the Apoſtle, *As we have opportunity, let us do good unto all men:* So the pious Man hath *diſperſed*. It follows;

Ubicunque homo eſt, ibi beneficio locus eſt. *Sen. de Vit. B. cap.* 24.

Gal. 6. 10. 2 Cor. 9. 13.

He hath given to the Poor. Theſe words denote the freeneſs of his Bounty, and determine the principal object thereof: He not only lendeth (though he alſo doth that upon reaſonable occaſion; for, *A good Man*, as it is ſaid before in this Pſalm, *ſheweth mercy, and lendeth*; and other-where, *The Righteous is ever merciful, and lendeth*; he, I ſay, not only ſometimes willingly lendeth) to thoſe who in time may repay, or requite him; but he freely giveth to the Poor, that is, to thoſe from whom he can expect no retribution back.

Pſalm 112. 5.

Pſalm 37. 26.

He

He doth not (as good and pious, he doth not) preſent the Rich; to do ſo, is but a cleanly way of Begging, or a ſubtle kind of Trade; 'tis hardly Courteſie, 'tis ſurely no Bounty; for ſuch Perſons (if they are not very ſordid, or very careleſs, and ſuch Men are not uſually much troubled with preſents) will it is likely over-do him, or at leaſt will be even with him in kindneſs; in doing this, there is little virtue; for it, there will be ſmall reward: For, *If you do good to them who do good to you*, (or whom you conceive able and diſpoſed to requite you) ποία χάρις, *what thanks* are due to you? For that (ſaith our Saviour) *even ſinners* (even Men notoriouſly bad) *do the ſame: And if you lend to them, from whom you hope to receive, what thanks have you? For ſinners even lend to ſinners, to receive as much again.* All Men commonly, the bad no leſs than the good, are

Qui diviti donat, petit.

Luke 6. 33, 34.

Ὅταν δ' ὁ δαίμων ἔυτε δίδῳ, τί χρὴ φίλων; Ἀρκεῖ γὰρ αὐτὸς ὁ θεὸς ὠφελεῖν θέλων. Eurip. in Oreſt.

Τῶν ἐυτυχούντων πάντες εἰσὶ συγγενεῖς.

are apt to be ſuperfluouſly kind in heaping Favours on thoſe, whom Fortune befriends, and whoſe condition requires not their Courteſie; every one almoſt is ready to adopt himſelf into the Kindred, or to ſcrue himſelf into the friendſhip of the Wealthy and Proſperous; but where Kindred is of uſe, there it is ſeldom found; it is commonly ſo deaf, as not to hear when it is call'd; ſo blind, as not diſcern its proper Object, and natural Seaſon; (*The time of adverſity for which a Brother is born*:) Men diſclaim alliance with the needy, and ſhun his acquaintance; ſo the Wiſe-man obſerved, *All the Brethren of the Poor do hate him, how much more do his Friends go far from him?* Thus it is in vulgar Practice: but the Pious Man is more judicious, more juſt, and more generous in the placing of his Favours; he is courteous to purpoſe, he is good to thoſe who need:

Prov. 17. 17.

Prov. 19. 7, 4.

Εὖ πρᾶσσε τὰ φίλων δ' ἀδὲν ἦν τις δυσυχῇ. Eurip.

need: He, as such, doth not make large entertainments *for his friends, his brethren, his kindred, his rich neighbours*; but observes that precept of our Lord, *When thou makest a Feast, call the poor, the maimed, the lame, the blind, and thou shalt be blessed; for they cannot recompence thee; thou shalt be recompenced at the resurrection of the Just.* Luk. 14. 12, 13. Thus the pious man giveth, that is, with a free heart and pure intention, bestoweth his Goods on the indigent, without designing any benefit, or hoping for any requital to himself; except from God, in Conscience, respect and love to whom he doth it.

It may be also material to observe the form of speech here used, in reference to the time: *He hath dispersed, and he hath given*; or, *he doth disperse, he doth give*, (for in the *Hebrew* Language the past and present times are not distinguished:) which manner of speak-

ing may ſeem to intimate the reality, or the certainty, and the conſtancy of his practice in this kind; for what is paſt or preſent, we are infallibly ſecure of; and in Morals, what one is ſaid to have done, or to do, is always underſtood according to habit, or cuſtom. It is not, *He will diſperſe, he will give*; that were no fit deſcription of a good Man; to pretend, would be no argument of Piety; thoſe words might import uncertainty, and delay in his practice: He that ſaith, *I will give*, may be fallacious in his profeſſions, may be inconſiſtent with his reſolutions; may wilfully or negligently let ſlip the due ſeaſon of performing it. Our good Man is not a *Doſon*, or *Will-give*, (like that King of *Macedon*, who got that name from often ſignifying an intention of giving, but never giving in effect); he not only purpoſes well, and promiſes fairly

Ἐπεκλήθη δὲ Δώσων ὡς ἐπαγγελτικὸς μὲν οὐ τελεστικὸς δὲ τῶν ὑποσχέσεων. Plut. in Paulo Æmil.

ly for the future, but he hath effectually done it, and perſeveres doing it upon every fit occaſion. He puts not his Neighbour into tedious expectations, nor puts him off with frivolous excuſes, ſaying to him, (as it is in the *Proverbs*) *Go and come again, and to morrow I will give, when he hath it by him:* He bids him not have patience, or ſays unto him, *Depart in peace*, when his need is urgent, and his pain impatient; when hunger or cold do then pinch him, when ſickneſs inceſſantly vexeth him, when preſent ſtreights and burthens oppreſs him; but he affordeth a ready, quick, and ſeaſonable relief. Prov. 3. 28. Jam. 2. 16.

He hath diſperſed, and *given*, while he lives, not reſerving the diſpoſal of all at once, upon his death, or by his laſt Will; that unwilling Will, whereby Men would ſeem to give ſomewhat, when they can keep nothing;

drawing to themſelves thoſe commendations and thanks, which are only due to their Mortality; when as were they Immortal, they would never be liberal: No; it is, *he hath freely diſperſed*, not an inevitable neceſſity will extort it from him; it cannot be ſaid of him, that he never does well, but when he dies: So he hath done it really and ſurely.

Avarus, niſi cùm moritur, nil rectè facit. *Laber.*

He alſo doth it conſtantly, through all the courſe of his life, whenever good opportunity preſents it ſelf: He doth it not by fits, or by accident, according to unſtable cauſes or circumſtances moving him, (when bodily temper or humour inclineth him, when a ſad Object makes vehement impreſſion on him; when ſhame obligeth him to comply with the practice of others; when he may thereby promote ſome deſign, or procure ſome glory to himſelf) but his practice is conſtant and uniform,

uniform, being drawn from ſteady principles, and guided by certain rules; proceeding from reverence to God, and good will toward Man; following the clear dictates, and the immutable Laws of Conſcience. Thus hath the Pious Man *diſperſed*, and *given to the poor:* and let thus much ſuffice for explicatory reflection upon the firſt words.

The main drift and purport of which, is to repreſent the liberal exerciſing of Bounty and Mercy, to be the neceſſary duty, the ordinary practice, and the proper character of a truly Pious Man; ſo that performing ſuch acts, is a good ſign of true Piety; and omitting them, is a certain argument of ungodlineſs: for the demonſtration of which Points, and for exciting us to a practice anſwerable, I ſhall propound ſeveral Conſiderations, whereby the plain reaſonableneſs, the great weight,

the high worth and excellency of this duty, together with its ſtrict connexion with other principal duties of Piety, will appear. And firſt, I will ſhew with what advantage the Holy Scripture repreſents it to us, or preſſes it upon us.

I. Head of diſcourſe.

1. We may conſider, that there is no ſort of Duties, which God hath more expreſly commanded, or more earneſtly inculcated, than theſe of Bounty and mercy toward our Brethren; whence evidently the great moment of them, and their high value in Gods eſteem may be inferred. Even in the ancient Law, we may obſerve very careful proviſions made for engaging men to works of this kind, and the performance of them is with huge life and urgency preſcribed: *Thou ſhalt not harden thy heart, nor ſhut thine hand from thy poor Brother.*—— *Thou ſhalt open thy hand wide unto thy Brother, unto thy Poor, and to thy Needy in the Land*: So

Deut. 15.7,10.

did

did *Moſes*, in Gods Name, with language very ſignificant and emphatical, enjoyn to the Children of *Iſrael*. The holy Prophets alſo do commonly with an eſpecial heat and vigour preſs theſe Duties, moſt ſmartly reproving the tranſgreſſion or neglect of them; eſpecially when they reclaim Men from their wicked Courſes, urging them ſeriouſly to return unto God and Goodneſs, they propoſe this practice as a ſingular Inſtance moſt expreſſive of their Converſion, moſt apt to appeaſe God's wrath, moſt effectual to the recovery of his favour. *Waſh you,* (ſaith God in *Eſay*) *make you clean, put away the evil of your doings from before mine eyes, ceaſe to do evil, learn to do well:* So in general he exhorts to repentance; then immediately he ſubjoyns theſe choice Inſtances thereof: *Seek Judgment, relieve the Oppreſſed, judge the Fatherleſs, plead for the*

Eſay 1.16,17, 18. Jer. 7. 5,6.

Widow.— *Come now* (then he adds) *let us reaſon together; though your ſins be as ſcarlet, they ſhall be as white as ſnow; though they be red like crimſon, they ſhall be as wooll.* When *Daniel* would preſcribe to King *Nebuchadnezzar* the beſt way of amendment, and the ſureſt means of averting God's Judgments impendent on him, he thus ſpeaks: *Wherefore, O King, let my counſel be acceptable unto thee,* * *break off thy ſins by righteouſneſs, and thine iniquities by ſhewing mercy to the Poor:* This he cull'd out as of all Pious Acts chiefly grateful to God, and clearly teſtifying Repentance; and, *ſo very impious a perſon was Alms able to juſtifie,* ſays the Father thereupon. So alſo when God himſelf would declare what thoſe Acts are, which render penitential devotions moſt agreeable to him, and moſt effectual, he thus expreſſeth his mind: *Is not this the Faſt which I have chofen?*

Dan. 4. 27.

* Τὰς ἁμαρτίας σου ἐλεημοσύναις λύτρωσαι; ſo the LXX render thoſe words, reading, it ſeems פרה for פרק Ναβουχοδονόσορ, τὸ τοιοῦτον ἀσεβῆ ἴσχυσεν ἡ ἐλεημοσύνη δικαιῶσαι. Athan ad Antioch. Quæſt. 87.

Iſa. 58. 6, 7.

choſen? To looſe the bands of wickedneſs, to undo the heavy burthens, to let the oppreſſed go free, and that ye break every yoak? Is it not to deal thy bread to the hungry, and that thou bring the poor that are caſt out to thine houſe; when thou ſeeſt the naked, that thou cover him, and that thou hide not thy ſelf from thine own fleſh? Of ſo great conſideration and moment was this ſort of Duties, even under that old diſpenſation of weakneſs, ſervility and fear; ſo much tenderneſs of compaſſion and benignity did God exact even from that hard-hearted and worldly People, who were ſo little capable of the beſt Rules, and had encouragements, in compariſon ſo mean, toward performances of this nature. The ſame we may well conceive, under the more perfect diſcipline of Univerſal Amity, of Ingenuity, of Spiritual Grace and Goodneſs, in a higher ſtrain, with more force and

and greater obligation to be imposed on us, who have so much stronger engagements, and immensly greater encouragements to them; and so indeed it is: for those Precepts delivered by our Lord, *Sell all that you have, and give Alms; If thou wilt be perfect, sell all that thou hast, and give to the Poor: Give to every man that asketh thee; Treasure not up to your selves treasures upon the earth,* do indeed sound high, but are not insignificant, or impertinent; they cannot signifie or design less, than that we should be always in affection, and disposition of mind, ready to part with any thing we have for the succour of our poor Brethren; that to the utmost of our ability, (according to Moral estimation prudently rated) upon all occasions we should really express that disposition in our practice; that we are exceedingly obliged to the continual exercise of these

Luke 12. 33. 6. 30. 11. 41.

Mat. 19. 21. 6. 19.

theſe Duties in a very eminent degree: Theſe indeed were the Duties which our Lord, as he did frequently in his Diſcourſe commend and preſcribe, ſo he did moſt ſignally exemplifie in his Practice; his whole Life being in effect but one continuall Act of moſt liberal Bounty and Mercy toward Mankind; in Charity to whom, he out-did his own ſevereſt Rules, being content never to poſſeſs any Wealth, never to enjoy any eaſe in this World: And therein (both as to Doctrine and Practice) did the holy Apoſtles cloſely follow their Maſter: *As poor, yet enriching many; as having nothing, yet poſſeſſing all things*. So they throughly in deeds practiſed theſe duties, which in words they taught, and earneſtly preſſed; admoniſhing their Converts to (*a*) *diſtribute to the neceſſities of the Saints*, to (*b*) *do good to all Men*; (*c*) *to do good, and to communicate not to forget*; to ſhew

2 Cor. 6. 10.

a Rom. 12. 13.
b Gal. 6. 10.
c Heb. 13. 16.

ſhew mercy with cheerfulneſs, to
d Coloſ. 3. 12. (d) *put on bowels of mercy*; to
e Epheſ. 4. 32. 2 Cor. 8. 7. (e) *be kind, and tender-hearted one toward another*; to *abound in the grace of liberality*. Such are their Directions and Injunctions to all Chriſtian People; ſo did they preach themſelves, and ſo they enjoyned others to preach:
1 Tim. 6. 7, 8. *Charge the rich in this world*, (ſaith St. *Paul* to his Scholar *Timothy*) *that they do good; that they be rich in good works, ready to diſtribute, willing to communicate*: And, *Theſe things* (ſaith he likewiſe adviſing Biſhop *Titus*) *I will that thou affirm conſtantly, that they which believe in God, may be careful to maintain good works*: What *good works* he meaneth, the reaſon adjoyned doth ſhew; *For theſe things* (ſaith he) *are good and profitable unto Men.*
Tit. 3. 8.

2. It is indeed obſervable, that as in every kind that which is moſt excellent, doth commonly aſſume to it ſelf the name of the whole kind;

kind; ſo among the parts of Righteouſneſs, (which word is uſed to comprehend all Vertue and Goodneſs) this of exerciſing Bounty and Mercy, is peculiarly called *Righteouſneſs*; ſo that *Righteouſneſs* and *Mercifulneſs* (or *Almsdeeds*) the righteous and bountiful Perſon are in Scripture-expreſſion ordinarily confounded, as it were, or undiſtinguiſhably put one for the other; it being often, when commendations are given to Righteouſneſs, and rewards promiſed to righteous Perſons, hard to diſcern, whether the general obſervance of God's Law, or the ſpecial practice of theſe Duties are concerned in them. Likewiſe works of this nature are in way of peculiar excellency termed *good works*, and to perform them is uſually ſtiled *to do good*, and *to do well*, ((*a*) ἀγαθὸν ἐργάζεσθαι, (*b*) καλὸν ποιεῖν, (*c*) ἀγαθοεργεῖν, (*d*) ἀγαθοποιεῖν, (*e*) εὐποιεῖν, (*f*) ἐνεργετεῖν, are words ap-

c Act. 9. 36. 1 Tim. 5. 10. 1 Tim. 6. 18. Tit. 3. 8, 14. 2 Cor. 9. 8. Gal. 6. *b* 9, *a* 10. *d* Luke 6. 35. *e* Heb. 13. 16. *f* Acts 10. 38.

applied to this purpoſe) which manners of expreſſion do argue the eminent dignity of theſe performances.

3. We may alſo conſequently mark, that in thoſe places of Scripture, where the Divine Law is abridged, and Religion ſum'd up into a few particulars of main importance, theſe Duties conſtantly make a part; ſo when the Prophet *Micah* briefly reckons up thoſe things, which are beſt in the Law, and chiefly required by God, the whole Catalogue of them conſiſting but of three particulars, *Mercy* comes in for one: *He hath ſhewed thee, O man (* ſaith he) *what is good, and what doth the Lord require of thee, but to do juſtly, and to love mercy, and to walk humbly with thy God?* Likewiſe of thoſe (βαρύτερα τῦ νόμυ, thoſe) more ſubſtantial and *weighty things of Gods Law*, the neglect of which our Saviour objecteth as an argument

Micah 6. 8.

ment of Impiety, and a cauſe of Wo, to thoſe pretending Zealots, this is one: *Wo unto you, Scribes and Phariſees, Hypocrites; for ye pay tythe of Mint and Cumin, and have omitted the weightier matters of the Law, Judgment, Mercy, and Faith.* The ſum of St. *John* the Baptiſt, his inſtruction of the People, is by St. *Luke* reduced to this Point: *The People asked him, ſaying, What ſhall we do?* He anſwering, ſaith unto them, *He that hath two Coats, let him impart to him that hath none; and he that hath meat, let him do likewiſe.* St. *James* his Syſtem of Religion is this: *Pure and undefiled Religion before God and the Father is this; to viſit the Fatherleſs and Widow in their affliction,* (that is, to comfort and relieve all diſtreſſed and helpleſs Perſons) *and to keep himſelf unſpotted from the World.* St. *Paul* ſeems to be yet more compendious and cloſe: *Bear ye* (ſaith he)

Mat. 23. 23.

Luke 3. 11.

Jam. 1. 27.

Gal. 6. 2.

he) *one anothers burthens, and ſo fulfil the Law of Chriſt.* Yea, God himſelf compriſeth all the ſubſtantial part of Religion herein, when comparing it with the circumſtantial part, he ſaith, *I will have mercy, and not ſacrifice.*

Hoſ. 6. 6.

4. It is in like manner conſiderable, that in the general deſcriptions of piety and goodneſs, the practiſe of theſe duties is ſpecified, as a grand ingredient of them. In this *Pſalm*, where ſuch a deſcription is intended, it is almoſt the only particular inſtance; and it is not only mentioned, but reiterated in divers forms of expreſſion. In the 37 *Pſalm* it is affirmed, and repeated, that *The righteous ſheweth mercy; he ſheweth mercy, and giveth; he ſheweth mercy, and lendeth. The righteous giveth, and ſpareth not.* In the *Proverbs*, 'tis a commendation of the vertuous woman, *whoſe price is far above rubies*, that, *ſhe ſtretcheth out*

Pſal. 37. 21, 26.

Prov. 22. 26.

Prov. 31. 20.

out her hand to the poor, yea, ſtretcheth forth both her hands to the needy. And in *Ezekiel* (which is eſpecially remarkable) the 18 Chapter, where the principal things conſtituting a pious man are, more than once, profeſſedly enumerated, this among a very few other particulars is expreſſed, and taketh up much room in the accompt; of ſuch a perſon (who *ſhall ſurely live and not die*; that is, who certainly ſhall abide in God's favour, and enjoy the happy conſequences thereof) it is ſuppoſed, that he *neither hath oppreſſed any, nor hath withholden the pledge, nor hath ſpoiled by violence; but hath given his bread to the hungry, and hath covered the naked with a garment; and hath taken off his hand from the poor.* Ezek. 18. 7, 16.

5. Alſo in the particular Hiſtories of good men, this ſort of practice is ſpecially taken notice of, and expreſſed in their characters.

Heb. 13. 2. In the ſtory of our Father *Abraham*, his benignity of ſtrangers, and hoſpitableneſs, is remarkable among all his deeds of goodneſs, being propounded to us as a pattern and encouragement to the like practice. In this the Conſci-

Job 29. 11. &c. ence of *Job* did ſolace it ſelf, as in a ſolid aſſurance of his integrity: *I delivered the poor that cried, and the fatherleſs, and him that had none to help him: The bleſſing of him that was ready to periſh came upon me, and I cauſed the widows heart to ſing: I was eyes to the blind,*

Job 30. 25. *and feet I was to the lame; I was a father to the poor. Did not I weep for him that was in trouble? was not my ſoul grieved for the poor?* Hence alſo did the good Publican recommend himſelf to the favour and approbation of our Saviour,

Luke 19. 8, 9. ſaying, *Behold, Lord, half of my goods I give to the poor*; hence did *ſalvation come to his houſe*; hence he is proclaimed, *a ſon of* Abraham.

ham. Of *Dorcas*, that good woman, who was so gracious and precious among the Disciples, this is the commendation and character; *She was full of good works, and alms-deeds which she did*; such practice made her capable of that favour, so great and extraordinary, the being restored to life; at least in St. *Chrysostom's* judgment: *The force of her alms*, saith he, *did conquer the tyranny of death.* *Cornelius* also, that excellent person, who was, though a *Gentile*, so acceptable to God, and had so extraordinary graces conferred on him, is thus represented: *He was a devout man, and one that feared God, with all his house, who gave much alms to the people; and prayed to God alway.* We may add, that to be hospitable (one branch of these duties, and inferring the rest) is reckoned a qualification of those, who are to be the Guides and Patterns of goodness unto others

Acts 9. 36.

Ἡ τῆ ἐλεημοσύνης δύναμις ἐνίκησε θανάτου τὸ τυραννίδα. Chryſ. in Gem. Orat. 55.

Acts 10. 2.

1 Tim. 3. 2. Tit. 4. 6.

thers: And particularly one fit to be promoted to a widows office in the *Church*, is thus deſcribed:

1 Tim. 5. 10. *Well reported of for good works; if ſhe have brought up children; if ſhe have lodged ſtrangers; if ſhe have waſhed the ſaints feet; if ſhe have relieved the afflicted; if ſhe have diligently followed every good work.*

6. So near to the heart of Piety doth the holy Scripture lay the practice of theſe duties; and no wonder; for it often expreſly declares Charity to be the fulfilling of Gods Law, as the beſt expreſſion of all our duty toward God, (of faith in him, love and reverence of him) and as either formally containing, or naturally producing all our duty toward our Neighbour. And of charity, works of bounty and mercy are both the chief inſtances, and the plaineſt ſigns: for whereas all charity doth conſiſt either in mental deſire, orin verbal ſignification,

Gal. 5. 14. Rom. 13. 9, 10. 1 Tim. 1. 5. Mat. 7. 12.

or

or in effectual performance of good to our Neighbour, this laſt is the end, the completion, and the aſſurance of the reſt. Good will is indeed the root of Charity; but that lies under-ground, and out of ſight; nor can we conclude its being or life without viſible fruits of beneficence: Good words are at beſt but fair leaves thereof, ſuch as may (and too often do) proceed from a weak and barren diſpoſition of mind; but theſe *good works* are *real fruits*, (ſo St. *Paul* calls them; *Let ours alſo*, ſaith he, *learn to maintain good works for neceſſary uſes, that they be not unfruitful*) which declare a true life, and a good ſtrength of charity in the bearer of them: by them τὸ γνησίον τῆς ἀγάπης, *the ſincerity* (or genuineneſs) *of our charity is proved*; for as no man ever doth impreſs a falſe ſtamp on the fineſt metal, ſo coſtly charity is ſeldom counter-

Ἐπίτασις ἀγάπης ὁ ἔλεος. Greg. Nyſſ. in Mat. 5. 7.

Tit 3. 14. Rom. 15. 28. Phil. 4. 17.

2 Cor. 8. 8.

feit: It is to decline ſpending their goods, or their pains, that men forge and feign; pretending to make up in wiſhing well, the defect of doing ſo; and paying words inſtead of things: But he that freely imparts what he hath, or can do for his Neighbours good, needs no other argument to evince that he loves in good earneſt, nor can indeed well uſe any other: for words, if actions are wanting, ſeem abuſive; and if actions are preſent, they are ſuperfluous: wherefore St. *John* thus adviſes:

1 John 3. 18. *My little children, let us not love in word, or in tongue,* (ἀλλ' ἔργῳ) *but in work and in truth*; to love in *work*, and to love in *truth*, he ſignifies to be the ſame thing; and to pretend love in ſpeech, without practiſing it in deed, he implies not allowable. And Saint *James* in way of compariſon ſays That as faith without works is dead, ſo love without beneficence

is

is uſeleſs: For, *If a brother or ſiſter be naked, and deſtitute of daily food, and one of you ſay unto him, Depart in peace, be you warmed and filled, notwithſtanding ye give them not thoſe things which are needful to the body, what doth it profit? Even ſo faith without works is dead.* Cold wiſhes of good, working no real benefit to our Neighbour, and a faint aſſent unto truth, producing no conſtant obedience to God, are things near of kin, and of like value; both of little worth or uſe. Charity then being the main point of Religion, Mercy and Bounty being the chief parts of Charity, well may theſe duties be placed in ſo high a rank, according to the divine Heraldry of Scripture. Jam. 2. 16.

7. To enforce which Obſervations, and that we may be farther certified about the weight and worth of theſe duties, we may conſider, that to the obſervance

of them most ample and excellent rewards are assigned; that in return for what we bestow on our poor brethren, God hath promised all sorts of the best mercies and blessings to us. The best of all good things (that which in *Davids* opinion was better than life it self) the fountain of all blessings (Gods love and favour, or mercy) is procured thereby, or is annexed to it: for *God loveth a chearful giver*, saith St. *Paul*; and *The merciful shall obtain mercy*, saith our Saviour; and, *Mercy rejoyceth against judgment* (or boasteth, and triumpheth over it; ἔλεος κατακαυχᾶται κρίσεως; that is, it appeaseth Gods wrath, and prevents our condemnation and punishment) saith St. *James*; God will not continue displeased with him, nor will withhold his mercy from him, who is kind and merciful to his Neighbour. 'Tis true, if rightly understood, what the *Hebrew* Wise-

Psal. 63. 3.

2 Cor. 9. 7.

Mat. 5. 7.

Jam. 2. 13.

Mat. 6. 14.

Wiſe-man ſaith, *Water will quench a flaming fire, and alms maketh an atonement of ſins:* For this practice hath the nature and name of a Sacrifice, and is declared, as ſuch, both in excellency and efficacy to ſurpaſs all other Sacrifices; to be moſt acceptable to God, moſt available for expiation of guilt; moſt effectual in obtaining mercy and favour. Other Sacrifices performed in obedience to Gods appointment, (on vertue of our Lords perfect obedience, and with regard to his pure Sacrifice of himſelf) did in their way propitiate God, and atone ſin; but this hath an intrinſick worth, and a natural aptitude to thoſe purpoſes; other oblations did ſignifie a willingneſs to render a due homage to God, this really, and immediately performs it; they were ſhadows or images well reſembling that duty, (parting with any thing we have for the ſake of God, and for

Ecclus. 3. 39. Si nudum veſtias, teipſum induis juſtitiam. *Ambr. Offic. c.* 11. *Hier. in Pſ.* 133

Chryſ. Tom. 5. or 55.

for purchaſing his favour) where-
of this is the body and ſubſtance:
this is therefore preferr'd as in it
Hoſ. 6. 6. ſelf excelling the reſt, and more
eſtimable in Gods ſight; ſo that
in compariſon of competition
therewith, the other ſeem to be
Mic. 6. 7. ſlighted and rejected. *I will*
(ſaith God) *have mercy and not*
ſacrifice; and, *Will the Lord be*
pleaſed with thouſands of rams, or
with ten thouſands of rivers of oyl?
Will he? that is, he will not be
pleaſed with ſuch ſacrifices, if they
be abſtracted from the more de-
lightful ſacrifices of bounty and
mercy. God never made an ex-
ception againſt theſe, or deroga-
gated from them in any caſe; they
abſolutely and perpetually are (as
Phil. 4. 18. St. *Paul* ſpeaketh) *Odours of a*
ſweet ſmell, Sacrifices acceptable
and well-pleaſing to God. And the
Apoſtle to the *Hebrews* ſeconds
Heb. 13. 8. him: *To do good*, ſaith he, *and to*
communicate, forget not; for with
ſuch

ſuch ſacrifices God is well pleaſed. By theſe, all other works, and all enjoyments are ſanctified; for, *Give alms* (ſaith our Lord) *of what you have, and behold all things are pure unto you.* Such charitable perſons are therefore frequently pronounced bleſſed, that is in effect inſtated in a confluence of all good things: *Bleſſed is he that conſidereth the poor*, ſays the Pſalmiſt; and, *He that hath a bountiful eye, is bleſſed*, ſaith *Solomon*; and, *He that hath mercy on the poor, happy is he*, ſaith the Wiſeman again; and, *Bleſſed are the merciful*, ſaith our Lord himſelf; ſo in groſs and generally; particularly alſo, and in retail the greateſt bleſſings are expreſly allotted to this practice: proſperity in all our affairs is promiſed thereto; *Thou* (ſaith *Moſes*) *ſhalt ſurely give thy poor brother, and thine heart ſhall not be grieved, that thou giveſt unto him, becauſe that for this*

Luke 11. 41.

Pſal. 41. 1.

Prov. 22. 9.

ver. 14. 21.

Mat. 5. 7.

Deut. 15. 10.

this thing the Lord thy God ſhall bleſs thee in all thy works, and in all that thou putteſt thine hand unto. Stability in a good condition is ordinarily conſequent thereon; ſo the Prophet *Daniel* implies, when adviſing King *Nebuchadnezzar* to theſe works, he adds, *If it may be a lengthing of thy tranquillity:* deliverance from evil incumbent, protection in imminent danger, and ſupport in afflictions, are the ſure rewards thereof; ſo the *Pſalmiſt* aſſures us: *Bleſſed* (ſaith he) *is he that conſidereth the poor, the Lord will deliver him in time of trouble; the Lord will preſerve him and keep him alive, and he ſhall be bleſſed upon earth; and thou wilt not deliver him into the will of his enemies; the Lord will ſtrengthen him upon the bed of languiſhing, thou wilt make all his bed in his ſickneſs.* Security from all want, is likewiſe a recompence proper thereto: for, *He that giveth to the poor ſhall not lack,*

Dan. 4. 17.

Pſal. 41. 1, &c.

Prov. 28. 27.

ſaith

ſaith the Wiſe-man: *If thou draw out thy ſoul to the hungry, and ſatisfie the afflicted ſoul, then ſhall thy light riſe in obſcurity.* Thriving in Wealth and Eſtate, is another ſpecial reward; for, *The liberal ſoul ſhall be made fat*; the ſame Author gives us his word for it: even of the good things here below to thoſe, who for his ſake in this, or any other way, do *let go houſes or lands*, our Lord promiſeth the return of *a hundred fold*, either in kind or in value. So great encouragements are annexed to this practice even in relation to the concernments of this tranſitory life; but to them beſide God hath deſtinated rewards incomparably more conſiderable and pretious; ſpiritual and eternal rewards, treaſures of heavenly wealth, crowns of endleſs glory, the perfection of joy and bliſs to be diſpenſed *at the reſurrection of the juſt*. *He that for my ſake hath left houſes or lands, ſhall recieve*

Iſa. 58. 10, 11, 12.

Prov. 11. 25.

Mat. 19. 29.

Luke 14. 13.

Mat. 19. 29. Mark 10. 30.

ceive a hundred-fold now at this time, (or in this preſent life) *and in the world to come ſhall inherit everlaſting life*; ſo infallible Truth hath aſſured us. They who perform theſe duties, are ſaid to
Luke 12. 33. *make themſelves bags, which wax not old; a treaſure that faileth not in*
Luke 16. 9. *the heavens*; to *make themſelves friends of the unrighteous mammon, who, when they fail,* (when they depart, and leave their earthly wealth) *will receive them into everlaſting habitations*; to *lay up*
1 Tim. 6. 19. *in ſtore for themſelves a good foundation againſt the time to come, that they may lay hold on eternal life*; ſuch rewards are promiſed to the obſervers.

8. And correſpondently grievous puniſhments are deſigned, and denounced to the tranſgreſſors of theſe duties; the worſt of miſeries is their portion and doom; they for being ſuch do forfeit Gods love and favour; they loſe

loſe his bleſſing and protection; they can have no ſure poſſeſſion of, nor any comfortable enjoyment of their Eſtate, for, *He* (ſaith St. *James*) *ſhall have judgment without mercy, who ſheweth no mercy*: And of ſuch a perſon it is ſaid in *Job*, *That which he laboureth for he ſhall reſtore, and ſhall not ſwallow it down; according to his ſubſtance ſhall the reſtitution be, and he ſhall not rejoyce therein; becauſe he hath oppreſſed, and forſaken the poor*; (not only becauſe he hath unjuſtly oppreſſed, but becauſe he hath uncharitably forſaken the poor:) If by the Divine forbearance ſuch perſons do ſeem to enjoy a fair *portion in this life*, (*proſpering in the world, and increaſing in riches*) they will find a ſad reckoning behind in the other world; this will be the reſult of that Audit: *Wo be unto you rich men, for you have received your conſolation*, (ſuch rich men are meant,

Jam. 2. 13.

Job 20. 18.

Pſal. 17. 14.

Pſal. 73. 12.

Luke 6. 24.

meant, who have got, or kept, or uſed their wealth baſely; who have detained all the conſolation it yields to themſelves, and imparted none to others;) and, *Remember, ſon, thou didſt receive thy good things in this life;* (ſo didſt receive them, as to ſwallow them, and ſpend them here; without any proviſion or regard for the future in the uſe of them;) and, *Caſt that unprofitable ſervant* (who made no good uſe of his Talent) *into utter darkneſs:* ſuch will be the fate of *every one, that treaſures up to himſelf, and is not rich unto God*; not rich in piety and charity, not rich in performing for Gods ſake works of bounty and mercy.

Luke. 16. 25.

Mat. 25. 30.

Luke 12. 21.

9. It is indeed moſt conſiderable, that at the final reckoning, when all mens actions ſhall be ſtrictly ſcann'd, and juſtly ſentenced according to their true deſert, a ſpecial regard will be had to the diſcharge or neglect of theſe duties,

ties. It is the bountiful and merciful perſons, who have relieved Chriſt in his poor members and brethren, who in that day will appear to be the ſheep at the right-hand; and ſhall hear the good Shepherds voice uttering thoſe joyful words, *Come ye bleſſed of my Father, enter into the Kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world: for I was an hungred, and ye gave me meat; I was thirſty, and ye gave me drink; I was a ſtranger, and ye took me in; I was naked, and ye cloathed me; I was ſick, and ye viſited me; I was in priſon, and ye came unto me:* He doth not ſay, becauſe ye have made goodly profeſſions, becauſe you have been Orthodox in your opinions, becauſe you have frequented religious Exerciſes, (have prayed often and long, have kept many Faſts, and heard many Sermons) becauſe you have been ſtaunch in your converſations, becauſe you Mat. 25. 34.

have been punctual in your dealings; becauſe you have maintained a ſpecious guiſe of piety, ſobriety, and juſtice, (although indeed he that will come off well at that great Trial, muſt be reſponſible, and able to yield a good accompt in reſpect to all thoſe particulars) but becauſe you have been charitably benign and helpful to perſons in need and diſtreſs; therefore bleſſed are you, therefore enter into the Kingdom of glorious bliſs prepared for ſuch perſons: this proceeding more than intimates, that in the judgment of our Lord no ſort of vertue or good practice is to be preferred before that of charitable bounty, or rarather that in his eſteem none is equal thereto; ſo that if the queſtion were put to him, which is one of them to *Antiochus*, (in *Athanaſius* his works) Which is the moſt eminent Vertue? Our Lord would reſolve it no otherwiſe, than is done

Athan. Tom. 2.

done by that Father, affirming, That Mercifulneſs is the Queen of Vertues; for that at the final accompt, the examination chiefly proceeds upon that; it is made the ſpecial Touchſtone of Piety, and the peculiar ground of happineſs. On the other ſide, thoſe who have been deficient in theſe performances, (uncharitable and unmerciful perſons) will at the laſt Trial appear to be the wretched Goats on the left hand, unto whom this uncomfortable ſpeech ſhall by the great Judge be pronounced: *Depart from me ye curſed into everlaſting fire, prepared for the Devil and his Angels: for I was hungry, and ye gave me no meat; I was thirſty, and ye gave me no drink; I was a ſtranger, and ye took me not in; naked, and ye clothed me not; ſick and in priſon, and ye viſited me not:* It is not, we may ſee, for having done that, which in this world is called rapine or wrong; Mat. 25. 41.

Οὐκ ὅτι διηρπάκασιν, οὐδ' ὅτι σεσυλήκασιν, οὐ μεμοιχεύκασιν, ἢ ἄλλο τι τῶν ἀπηγορευμένων πεποιήκασιν, ταύτην τὴν τάξιν κατακριθέντες, ἀλλ' ὅτι μὴ χριστὸν διὰ τῶν δεσμένων τεθεραπεύκασιν. Greg. Naz. Orat. 16.

for having pillaged, or cozened their Neighbour; for having committed Adultery or Murther, or any other thing prohibited, that these unhappy men are said to be formerly impeached, and finally condemned to that miserable doom, but for having been unkind and unmerciful to their poor brethren: this, at that high Tribunal will pass for a most enormous crime, for the capital offence; for this it is, that they shall be cursed, and cast down into a wretched consortship with those malicious and merciless Fiends, unto whose disposition they did so nearly approach.

Thus it appears how mighty a stress God in the holy Scripture doth lay upon these duties, so peremptorily commanding them, so vehemently pressing them, so highly commending them, so graciously by promises alluring us to the performance, so dreadfully by threat-

threatnings deterring us from the neglect of them: what an affront then will it be to God's Authority, what a diſtruſt to his Word, what a contempt of his Power, his Juſtice, his Wiſdom, what a deſpight to his Goodneſs and Mercy, if notwithſtanding all theſe Declarations of his will and purpoſes, we ſhall preſume to be uncharitable in this kind? There are alſo Conſiderations (very many, very clear, and very ſtrong) which diſcover the great reaſonableneſs and equity of theſe Laws, with our indiſpenſable obligation to obey them; the which indeed with greater force do exact theſe duties from us, and do more earneſtly plead in the poor mans behalf, than he can beg or cry. If we either look up unto God, or down upon our poor Neighbour; if we reflect upon our ſelves, or conſider our wealth it ſelf, every where we may diſcern various reaſons

obliging us, and various motives inducing us to the practice of these duties.

In regard to God.

II. Head of Discourse.

1. We may consider, that by exercising of bounty and mercy, we are kind and courteous to God himself; by neglecting those duties, we are unkind and rude to him: for that what of good or evil is by us done to the poor, God interprets and accepts as done to himself. The poor have a peculiar relation to God; he openly and frequently professeth himself their especial Friend, Patron and Protector; he is much concerned in, and particularly chargeth his Providence with their support: in effect therefore they shall surely be provided for, one way or other, (*The poor shall eat and be satisfied*; *God will save the afflicted people*; *The Lord preserveth the strangers, he*

Psal. 22. 26. 18. 27. 146. 9.

he relieveth the fatherleſs and widow. When the poor, and needy Iſa. 41. 17.
ſeek water, and there is none, and their tongue faileth for thirſt, I the Lord will hear them, I the God of Iſrael *will not forſake them*). But out of goodneſs to us, he chuſeth (if it may be, we freely concurring therein) and beſt liketh, that it ſhould be done by our hands; this conducing no leſs to our benefit, than to theirs; we thereby having opportunity to ſhew our reſpect to himſelf, and to lay an engagement on him to do us good. God therefore lendeth the poor man his own Name, and alloweth him to crave our ſuccour for his ſake; (when the poor man asketh us in God's Name, or for God's ſake, he doth not uſurp or forge, he hath good authority, and a true ground for doing ſo) God gives him credit from himſelf unto us for what he wants, and bids us charge what he receiveth on his

own accompt; permitting us to reckon him obliged thereby, and to write him our debtor; engaging his own word and reputation duly to repay, fully to ſatisfie us: *He that hath pity on the poor, lendeth to the Lord, and that which he hath given, will he pay him again*, ſaith the Wiſe-man; and, *In as much as ye have done it to the leaſt of my brethren, ye have done it unto me*, ſaith our Saviour: And, *God is not unrighteous to forget your work and labour of love, which ye have ſhewed toward his Name, in that ye have miniſtred to the Saints, and do miniſter*, ſaith the Apoſtle. What therefore we give to the poor, God accepteth as an expreſſion of kindneſs to himſelf, being given to one of his friends and clients, in reſpect to him; he regards it as a teſtimony of friendly confidence in him, ſignifying that we have a good opinion of him, that we take him for able and

Prov. 19. 17.

Mat. 25. 40, 45.

Heb. 6. 10.

and willing to requite a good turn, that we dare take his word, and think our goods ſafe enough in his cuſtody. But if we ſtop our ears, or ſhut our hands from the poor, God interprets it as a harſh repulſe, and an heinous affront put upon himſelf; we doing it to one, who bears his Name, and wears his Livery, (for the poor mans rags are badges of his relation unto God) he thereby judges, that we have little good will, little reſpect, little compaſſion toward himſelf, ſince we vouchſafe not to grant him ſo mean a favour, ſince we refuſe at his requeſt, and (as it were) in his need, to accommodate him with a ſmall ſum, he juſtly reputes it as an argument of unkindly diffidence in him, that we have ſorry thoughts of him, deeming him no good Correſpondent, little valuing his word, ſuſpecting his goodneſs, his truth, or his ſufficiency.

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2. We

2. We by practiſing thoſe duties are juſt, by omitting them are very unjuſt toward God. For our goods, our wealth, and our eſtate, are indeed none of them ſimply or properly our own, ſo that we have an abſolute property in them, or an entire diſpoſal of them: no, we are utterly incapable of ſuch a right unto them, or power over them: God neceſſarily is the true and abſolute Proprietary of them. They are called the gifts of God, but we muſt not underſtand that God by giving them to us, hath parted with his own right to them; they are depoſited with us in truſt, not alienated from him; they are committed to us as Stewards, not transferred upon us as Maſters: they are ſo ours, that we have no authority to uſe them according to our will or fancy, but are obliged to manage them according to Gods direction and order. He by right im-

Eccleſ. 5. 19. 6. 2.

immutable is Lord Paramount of all his Creation; every thing unalienably belongs to him, upon many accompts: He out of nothing made all things at firſt, and to every Creature through each moment a new being is conferr'd by his preſervative influence; originally therefore he is Lord of all things, and continually a new Title of Dominion over every thing ſpringeth up unto him: it is his always, becauſe he always maketh it. We our ſelves are naturally meer Slaves and Vaſſals to him: as we can never be our own, (Maſters of our ſelves, of our lives, of our liberties) ſo cannot we ever properly be owners of any thing; there are no poſſible means by which we can acquire any abſolute Title to the leaſt mite; the principal right to what we ſeem to get, according to all Law and Reaſon, accrueth to our Maſter. All things about

us,

us, by which we live, with which we work and trade; the Earth which ſupports and feeds us, and furniſheth us with all commodities; the Air we breathe, the Sun and Stars which cheriſh our life, are all of them his, his Productions, and his Poſſeſſions, ſubſiſting by his pleaſure, ſubject to his diſpoſal: How then can any thing be ours? how can we ſay with the fooliſh Churl *Nabal, Shall I take my bread, and my water, and my fleſh, and give it?* Thine? O inconſiderate man! How cam'ſt thou by it? how doſt thou hold it? didſt thou make it, or doſt thou preſerve it? Canſt thou claim any thing by Nature? No, thou broughteſt nothing with thee into the world, thou didſt not bring thy ſelf hither: Canſt thou challenge any thing to thy ſelf from Chance? No, for there is no ſuch thing as Chance, all things being guided and governed by God's Providence.

Pſal. 24. 1. 50. 12. 89. 11. 95. 5.

1 Sam. 25. 11.

Sed ais; Quid in juſtum eſt, ſi cùm alienam non invadam, propria diligentiùs ſervem? O impudens dictum! propria dicis? quæ? ex quibus reconditis in hunc mundum detuliſti? *Ambroſ.*

dence. Doſt thou conceive thy Induſtry can entitle thee to any thing? Thou art miſtaken, for all the wit and ſtrength thou appli-eſt, the head thou contriveſt with, and the hands thou workeſt with, are God's; all the ſucceſs thou findeſt did wholly depend on him, was altogether derived from him; all thy projects were vain, all thy labours would be fruitleſs, did not he aſſiſt and bleſs thee: Thou doſt vainly and falſly *lift up thine heart, and forget the Lord thy God, when as thy herds and flocks multiply, and thy ſilver and gold is multiplied, and all that thou haſt is multiplied; if thou ſayeſt in thy heart, My power and the might of my hand hath gotten me this wealth: But thou muſt remember the Lord thy God, for it is he that giveth thee power to get wealth. —Who am I, and what is my people, that we ſhould be able to offer ſo willingly after this ſort? for all things come of thee; and*

Deut. 8. 13, 14, 17, 18.

1 Chron. 29. 15.

and of thine own have we given thee. Since then upon all ſcores every thing we have, doth appertain to God, he may without any injury recal or reſume whatever he pleaſeth; and while he letteth any thing abide with us, we cannot juſtly uſe it otherwiſe than he hath appointed, we cannot duly apply it otherwiſe than to his intereſt and ſervice. God then having enjoyned, that after we have ſatisfied our neceſſities, and ſupplied our reaſonable occaſions, we ſhould imploy the reſt to the relief of our poor Neighbours; that *if we have two coats,* (one more than we need) *we ſhould impart one to him that hath none; if we have meat* abundant, that we *likewiſe* communicate to him that wants it: God by the poor mans voice (or by his need and miſery) demanding his own from us, we are very unjuſt if we *preſume* to withhold it; doubly unjuſt we are, both

Aliena rapere convincitur, qui ultra neceſſaria ſibi retinere probatur. *Hieron.*

Quicquid Deus pluſquam opus eſt dederit, non nobis ſpecialiter dedit, ſed per nos aliis erogandum tranſmiſit, quod ſi non dederimus, res alienas invaſimus. *Aug. Serm.* 219. *de Temp.* Luke 3. 11.

Proprium nemo dicat quod commune; pluſquam ſufficeret ſumptui violenter obtentum eſt. *Ambroſ.*

both toward God, and toward our Neighbour: We are unfaithful Stewards, misapplying the goods of our Master, and crossing his order: We are wrongful Usurpers, detaining from our Neighbour that which God hath allotted him: We are in the Court of Conscience, we shall appear at the Bar of Gods Judgment no better than Robbers, (under vizards of legal right and possession) spoiling our poor Brother of his goods; his, I say, by the very same title as any thing can be ours, by the free donation of God, fully and frequently expressed, as we have seen, in his holy Word: (he cannot take it away by violence or surreption against our will, but we are bound willingly to yield it up to him; to that, were disorder in him; to refuse this, is wrong in us:) * 'Tis the hungry mans bread, which we hoard up in our barns; 'tis his meat, on which we gult;

Σὺ δὲ οὐκ ἀποστερητὴς, ἀπρὸς οἰκονομίαν ἐδέξω, ταῦτα ἴδια σαυτοῦ ποιούμενος. Bas. M.

* Nostrum est pauperes clamant quod effunditis; nobis crudeliter subtrahitur, quod inaniter expenditur. *Bern. Ep.* 42.

glut; and his drink, which we guzzel: 'Tis the naked mans apparel, which we ſhut up in our preſſes, or which we exorbitantly ruffle and flant in: 'tis the needy perſons gold and ſilver which we cloſely hide in our cheſts, or ſpend idly, or put out to uſeleſs uſe: we are in thus holding, or thus ſpending, truly πλεονέκται, not only covetous, but wrongful, or havers of more than our own, againſt the will of the right owners; plainly violating that precept of *Solomon*, *Withhold not good from them to whom it is due, when it is in the power of thy hand to do it.* If we were ambitious of having a property in ſomewhat, or affect to call any thing our own; 'tis only by nobly giving that we can accompliſh our deſire, that will certainly appropriate our goods to our uſe and benefit: but from baſely keeping, or vainly embezelling them, they become not our poſ-

Prov. 3. 27.

Omne quod malè poſſidetur alienum eſt; male autem poſſidet, qui malè utitur. *Auguſt. Ep.* 54.

poſſeſſion and enjoyment, but our theft and our bane. (Theſe things, ſpoken after the holy Fathers, wiſe Inſtructors in matters of piety, are to be underſtood with reaſonable temperament, and practiſed with honeſt prudence. I cannot ſtand to diſcuſs caſes, and remove ſcruples; a pious Charity will eaſily diſcern its due limits and meaſures, both declining perplexity, and not evading duty: the ſum is, that juſtice towards God and man obligeth us, not to ſuffer our poor Brother to periſh, or pine away for want, when we ſurfeit and ſwim in plenty; or not to ſee him lack neceſſaries, when we are well able to relieve him.)

3. Shewing bounty and mercy are the moſt proper and the principal expreſſions of our gratitude unto God; ſo that in omitting them, we are not only very unjuſt, but highly ungrateful. Innumerable are the benefits, favours and

mercies, (both common and private) which God hath beſtowed on us, and doth continually beſtow; he inceſſantly ſhowres down
Pſal. 68. 19. bleſſings on our heads; he *daily*
Pſal. 103. 4. *loadeth us with his benefits*; he perpetually *crowneth us with loving kindneſs and tender mercies:* all that we are, all that we have, all that we can hope for of good, is alone from his free bounty; our beings and lives, with all the conveniencies and comforts of them, we entirely owe to him as to our Maker, our Preſerver, our conſtant Benefactor: all the excellent priviledges we enjoy, and all the glorious hopes we have as Chriſtians, we alſo ſtand indebted for purely to his undeſerved mercy, and
Pſal. 116. 12. grace; and, *What ſhall we render unto the Lord for all his benefits towards us?* Shall we render him nothing? ſhall we refuſe him any thing? ſhall we boggle at making returns ſo inconſiderable, in regard

gard to what he hath done for us? What is a little Gold, or Silver, or Braſs perhaps, which our poor Neighbour craveth of us, in compariſon of our life, our health, our reaſon, to all accommodations of our body, and all endowments of our mind? What are all the goods in the world to the love and favour of God, to the pardon of our ſins, to the gifts of Gods Spirit, to the dignity of being the children of God, and heirs of ſalvation; to the being freed from all extream miſeries, and made capable of eternal felicity? And doth not this unexpreſſible goodneſs, do not all theſe ineſtimable benefits require ſome correſpondent thankfulneſs? Are we not obliged, ſhall we not be willing to exhibit ſome real teſtimony thereof? And what other can we exhibit beſide this? We cannot directly or immediately requite God, for he cannot ſo receive any

thing from us; he is not capable of being himſelf enriched or exalted, of being any-wiſe pleaſured or bettered by us, who is in himſelf infinitely ſufficient, glorious, joyful and happy: *Our goodneſs extends not to him; A man cannot be profitable to his Maker:* All that we can do in this kind, is thus indirectly, in the perſons of his poor relations, to gratifie him, imparting at his deſire and for his ſake ſomewhat of what he hath beſtowed on us, upon them. Such a thankful return we owe unto God, not only for what he hath given us, but even for the capacity of giving to others; for that we are in the number of thoſe who can afford relief; and who need not to demand it. Our very wealth and proſperous ſtate ſhould not ſeem to us ſo contemptible things, that we ſhould be unwilling to render ſomewhat back in grateful reſentment for them: the

Pſal. 16. 2.

Job 22. 2.

Δός τι θεῷ χαριστήριον ὅτι τῶν εὖ ποιεῖν δυναμένων ἐγένου, ἀλλ' οὐ τῶν εὖ παθεῖν δεομένων Naz. - τὸν φιλάνθρωπον ὑμνῆσαι δεσπότην, ὅτι τοῖς ἀλλοτριοῖς ἡμᾶς σωφρονίζει παθήμασι καὶ οὐκ

the very act of giving is it ſelf no mean benefit, (having ſo much of honour in it, ſo much of pleaſure going with it, ſo much of reward following it) we receive far more than we return in giving; for which therefore it is fit, that we ſhould return our gratitude, and conſequently that we ſhould perform theſe duties: for indeed without this practice, no other expreſſion of gratitude can be true in it ſelf, or can be acceptable unto God: We may ſeem abundantly to thank him in words, but a ſparing hand gives the lye to the fulleſt mouth; we may ſpare our breath, if we keep back our ſubſtance; for all our praiſing God for his goodneſs, and bleſſing him with our lips, if we will do nothing for him, if we will not part with any thing for his ſake, appears meer complement, is in truth plain mockery, and vile hypocriſie.

ἡμᾶς εἰς ἑτέρων παρέπεμψεν οἰκίας, ἀλλ' εἰς τὰς ἡμετέρας ἀλλὰς ἤγαγε θύρας. Theod. *Ep.* 30.

εἰ δὲ μὴ νομίζεις λαμβάνειν μᾶλλον, ἢ δι-δόναι, μὴ παῤῥήσῃς. Chryſ. *T. V.* Orat. 54.

Nec enim homo Deo præſtat beneficium in his, quæ dederit; ſed Deus his homini, quæ acceperit. *Salvian.*

4. Yea, which we may further consider; All our devotion severed from a disposition of practising these duties, is no less such, cannot have any true worth in it, shall not yield any good effect from it. Our prayers, if we are uncharitably disposed, what are they other than demonstrations of egregious impudence and folly? For how can we with any face presume to ask any thing from God, when we deny him requesting a small matter from us? How can we with any reason expect any mercy from him, when we vouchsafe not to shew any mercy for his sake? Can we imagine, that God will hearken unto, or mind our petitions, when we are deaf to his entreaties, and regardless of his desires? *Whoso stoppeth his ears at the cry of the poor, he also shall cry himself, but shall not be heard.* No; 'tis his declaration to such bold and unreasonable petitioners,

Prov. 21. 13.

titioners, *When you ſpread forth your hands, I will not hear you, when you make many prayers, I will not hear:* No importunity, no frequency of prayers will move God in ſuch a caſe; the needy mans cries and complaints will drown their noiſe; his ſighs and groans will obſtruct their paſſage, and ſtop the ears of God againſt them: Likewiſe all our ſemblances of repentance, all our corporal abſtinencies, and auſterities, if a kind and merciful diſpoſition are wanting, what are they truly but preſumtuous dallyings, or impertinent triflings with God? For do we not groſly collude with ſin, when we reſtrain the ſenſual appetites of the body, but fument the ſouls more unreaſonable deſires? when we curb our wanton fleſh, and give licenſe to a baſe ſpirit; Do we not palpably baffle, when in reſpect to God, we pretend to deny our ſelves, yet upon

Iſa. 1. 15.

Jam. 5. 4.

Ecclus. 4. 4, 5, 6.

τί δὲ χέρδος. σωφροσύνη μέτα ἀπανθρωπίας; &c. Chryſ. T. 5. or 55.

urgent occasion allow him nothing? Do we not strangely prevaricate, when we would seem to appease Gods anger, and purchase his favour by our submissions, yet refuse to do that, which he declares most pleasing to him, and most necessary to those purposes? It is an ordinary thing for men thus to serve God, and thus to delude themselves: *I have known many* (saith St. *Basil*) *who have fasted, and prayed, and groaned, and expressed all kind of costless piety, who yet would not part with one doit to the afflicted*: such a cheap and easie piety, which costs us little or nothing, can surely not be worth much; and we must not conceit that the All-wise God (*the God of knowledge, by whom actions are weighed*, as *Anna* sang; and, who *weigheth the spirits* also, as the Wise-man saith) will be cheated therewith, or take it for more than its just value. No, he hath expresly

Οἶδα πολλὸς νηστεύοντας, προσευχομένους στενάζοντας, πᾶσαν τὴν ἀδάπανον ἐνλάβειαν ἐνδεικνυμένους, ὀβολὸν δὲ ἕνα μὴ προιεμένους τοῖς θλιβομένοις. Bas. M. in Luk. 12. 8.

1 Sam. 2. 3.

Prov. 16. 2.

preſly ſignified, that he hath *not choſen* ſuch ſervices, nor doth take any pleaſure in them; he hath called them *vain and impertinent oblations*; not *ſweet* or *acceptable*, but abominable and *troubleſome* to him, ſuch as he *cannot away with*, and *is weary to bear*. 'Tis *religious liberality* that doth prove us to be ſerious and earneſt in other *religious performances*; which aſſures that we value matters of piety at a conſiderable rate; which gives a ſubſtance and ſolidity to our devotions; which ſanctifies our faſts, and veriſies our penances; which renders our praiſes real, and our prayers effectual; ſo that theſe being combined, we may reaſonably expect acceptance and recompence; and in effect to hear that from God, which by him was returned to good *Cornelius*, *Thy prayers and thine alms are come up for a memorial before God.*

2 Sam. 24. 24.
Iſa. 58. 5. & 1. 13, 14. Mic. 6. 7. Jer. 6. 13, 20.
Act. 10. 4.

5. The conſcionable practice of

of thoſe duties, doth plainly ſpring from thoſe good diſpoſitions of mind, regarding God, which are the original grounds and fountains of all true piety; and the neglect of them iſſueth from thoſe vitious diſpoſitions, which have a peculiar inconſiſtency with piety, being deſtructive thereof in the very foundation and root. Faith in God is the Fundamental Grace upon which Piety is grounded; Love and Fear of God, are the Radical Principles, from which it grows; all which as the charitable man diſcovers in his practice, ſo they are apparently baniſhed from the heart of the illiberal and unmerciful perſon.

As for Faith, the good man in ſhewing bounty, exerciſeth the chief act thereof; he freely parteth with his goods, becauſe he truſteth on God's Providence more than them; and believeth God more ready to help him, than any Creature

Creature can do, in his need; because he is perſwaded, that God is moſt good and benign, ſo as never to ſuffer him to be oppreſſed with want; becauſe he taketh God to be juſt and faithful, who having charged him *to care for nothing, but to caſt his care and burthen upon the Lord*, having promiſed *to care for him*, to *ſuſtain him, never to leave or forſake him*; having alſo engaged himſelf to repay and recompence him for what he giveth to his poor Neighbour, will not fail to make good his word; becauſe he thinks God abundantly ſolvent, and himſelf never the poorer for laying out in his behalf; becauſe, in ſhort, he is content to live in a dependence upon God, and at his diſpoſal. It is mentioned by the Apoſtle to the *Hebrews*, as a ſpecial inſtance of a reſolute and conſtant faith in the firſt Chriſtians, that *they took joyfully the ſpoyling of their goods, knowing*

Mat. 6. 25. Phil. 4. 6. 1 Pet. 5. 7. Pſal. 55. 23. Heb. 13. 5. Heb. 10. 34.

ing in themſelves, that they had in heaven a better and an enduring ſubſtance: he that not forcibly by the violent rapacity of others, but voluntarily by his own free reſignation for the ſervice of God, delivereth them up, with the ſame alacrity, opinion and hope, thereby demonſtrates the ſame faith. But the *Gripple Wretch*, who will beſtow nothing on his poor Brother for Gods ſake, is evidently an Infidel, having none at all, or very heatheniſh conceits of God: He muſt either be a meer Atheiſt, disbelieving the exiſtence of God; or an Epicurean, in his heart denying Gods Providence over humane affairs: (for did he conceive God to have any regard unto, or any influence over what paſſes here, how could he be afaid of wanting upon this ſcore? how could he repoſe any confidence in theſe poſſeſſions? how could he think himſelf ſecure in ſuch a neglect

ὃ γὰρ τοιοῦτος οὐ τῷ θεῷ πεπίστευκεν, ἀλλὰ πρὸ ἑαυτῷ χρυσίῳ, θεὸν τοῦτο ἡγούμενος, καὶ ἐπ' αὐτῷ πεποιθώς. Const. Apoſt. 4. 4.

neglect or defiance of God?) Or he muſt be exceedingly prophane, entertaining moſt diſhonourable and injurious apprehenſions of God: He cannot but imagine God very unkind, not only in neglecting men that want his help, but in making them to ſuffer for ſpending upon his accompt; very unjuſt, in not repaying what he borrows; very unfaithful, in breakiſig his word; very deceitful, in gulling us of our things by fair promiſes of reſtitution and requital: Or he muſt apprehend God forgetful of what we do, and himſelf ſays; or that he is needy and impotent, not having wherewith to make ſatisfaction, not being able to make good what he pretends. He muſt in his conceit debaſe God even beneath the vileſt Creatures, thinking a ſenſeleſs lump of clay more apt in his need to help him, than God can be with all his power and care; ſuppoſing

posing his money safer in his own Coffers than in Gods hands; and that Iron Bars will guard it more surely, than divine protection; esteeming his Neighbours Bond far much better security than Gods Word; and that a mortal man is far more able or more true, than the Eternal Lord. He certainly cannot think one word true, that God says, being loth to trust him for a penny, for a piece of bread, or for an old garment; all God's promises of recompence, and threatnings of punishment, he takes for idle fictions; Heaven and Hell are but *Utopia*'s in his conceit; the joyes of one, offered to the charitable person, are but pleasant fancies; the torments of the other, denounced to the uncharitable, but fearful dreams: all other things are but names, Money and Lands are the only real things unto him: all the happiness he can conceive or wish,

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is contained in bags and barns; theſe are the ſole points of his Faith, and objects of his confidence. *He makes gold his hope, and ſaith to the fine gold, Thou art my confidence: he rejoyces becauſe his wealth is great, and becauſe his hand hath gotten much,* (as *Job* ſpeaketh, diſclaiming that practice in himſelf, and tacitly charging it on the perſons we ſpeak of.) He doth in fine affect a total independency upon God, and cares to have no dealing with him; he would truſt to himſelf, and live on his own eſtate; ſo groſs infidelity, and horrible profaneneſs of mind, lie couched under this ſort of vices. Habac. 2. 9. Job 31. 24.

As for the love of God, the liberal man declares it, in that for God's ſake he is willing to part with any thing; that he values God's love and favour above all other goods; that he deems himſelf rich and happy enough in the enjoyment

1 Joh. 3. 17. enjoyment of God. But, *Who hath this worlds goods, and ſeeth his brother have need, and ſhutteth up his bowels from him, how dwelleth the love of God in him?* ſaith St. *John*; that is, it is impoſſible he ſhould love God; 'tis a vain conceit to think he does; 'tis a frivolous thing for him to pretend it: for how poſſibly can he bear in his heart any affection to God, who will not for his ſake, nor at his inſtance part with a little worthleſs traſh, and dirty pelf? who prizes ſo inconſiderable matters beyond God's favour and friendſhip? who prefers the keeping of his wealth, before the enjoyment of God; and chuſes rather certainly to quit his whole intereſt in God, than to adventure a ſmall parcel of his eſtate with God? His practice indeed ſufficiently diſcovers, that his hard and ſtupid heart is uncapable of any love, except of a corrupt, inordinate

nate and fond love, or dotage toward himself, since so present and sensible objects cannot affect him: *He that loveth not his brother whom he hath seen, how can he love God whom he hath not seen?* 1 Joh 4.20.

And as to the fear and reverence of God, the liberal man expresses it in submission to God's commands, although with his own present seeming diminution and loss; in prefering the discharging of his Conscience before the retaining his Money; in casting over-board his temporal goods, that he may secure his spiritual and eternal concernments: He can say (his practice attesting to his profession) with *David, I love thy Commandments above gold*; and *The Law of thy mouth is dearer to me than thousands of gold and silver*; he shews, that he *is a man of truth, fearing God, and hating covetousness*; which dispositions, as having much affinity and connexion, are well joyned Pſal. 119. 127, 72. Exod. 18. 21.

together by *Jethro*. But the uncharitable man can have little fear of God before his eyes; since the commands of God have no efficacy on his Conscience; since he dreads not the effects of divine power and justice, provoked by his disobedience; since he deems an imaginary danger of want from giving, worse than a certain commission of sin in withholding; and is more afraid of penury here, than of damnation hereafter.

The truth is, the covetous or illiberal man is therefore uncapable of being truly pious, because his heart is possessed with vain devotion toward somewhat beside God, which in effect is his sole Divinity: he is justly stiled an Idolater, for that he directs and employs the chief affections of his mind upon an Idol of Clay, which he loves with all his heart and all his soul, which he entirely confides in, which he esteems and worships above

Col. 3. 5.
Ephes. 5 5.

above all things. It is Mammon, which of all the Competitors and Antagoniſts of God, invading Gods right, and uſurping his place, Mat. 6. 24. is (as our Lord intimates) the moſt dangerous, and deſperately repugnant: where he becomes predominant, true Religion is quite excluded, *Ye cannot ſerve God and Mammon.* Other vitious inclinations combat reaſon, and often baffle it, but ſeldom ſo vanquiſh it, as that a man doth approve or applaud himſelf in his miſcarriages; but the covetous humour ſeizeth on our reaſon it ſelf, and ſeateth it ſelf therein; inducing it to favour and countenance what is done amiſs: the voluptuous man is ſwayed by the violence of his appetite, but the covetous is ſeduced by the dictate of his judgment; he therefore ſcrapes and hoards, and lets go nothing, becauſe he eſteems wealth the beſt thing in the world, and

then judges himself most wise when he is most base: *Labour not to be rich, cease from thine own wisdom*, saith *Solomon*; intimating the judgment such persons are wont to make of their riches whence of all dispositions opposite to piety, this is the most pernicious. But further, Prov. 23. 4.

6. Let us consider; That nothing is more conformable to Gods nature, or renders us more like to him, than beneficence and mercy; and that consequently nothing can be more grateful to him; that nothing is more disagreeable and contrary to the essential disposition of God, than illiberality and unmercifulness; and therefore that nothing can be more distastful to him. What is any being in the world, but an efflux of his bounty, and an argument of his liberality? Look every where about Nature, consider the whole tenour of Providence, survey

ſurvey all the works and ſcan all the actions of God, you will find them all conſpiring in atteſtation to thoſe ſweet Characters and Elogies, which the holy Scripture aſcribeth to God, repreſenting him to be *Merciful and gracious, long-ſuffering, and abundant in goodneſs*; Exod. 34. 6.
to be *ſorry for evil*, (incident or inflicted upon any Creature) to *delight in mercy*, to *wait that he may be gracious*; ſtiling him the *God of love, of peace, of hope, of patience, of all grace, and of all conſolation*; *the Father of pities, rich in mercy, and full of bowels*; affirming of him, and by manifold evident evidences demonſtrating, that he is *benign even unto the ingrateful and evil*; that *He is good to all, and his tender mercies are over all his works.* Nature, (I ſay) Providence and Revelation, do all concur in teſtifying this, that there is nothing in God ſo peculiarly admirable, nothing (as it were)

Joel 2. 13.
Mic. 7. 18.
Iſai. 30. 18.
Rom. 5. 33. 13. 5.
Epheſ. 2. 4.
2 Cor. 13. 11. 1. 3.
Jam. 5. 11.
1 Pet. 5. 10.
Luk. 6. 35.
Pſal. 145. 9.
Θεῷ πολλῶν ὄντων, ἐφ' οἷς θαυμάζεται, δηλὸν ὅτως ὡς τὸ πάντας εὐεργετεῖν ἰδιώτατον. Naz. Orat. 26.

were) so God-like; that is, so highly venerable and amiable, as to do good and shew mercy. We therefore by liberal communication to the needy, do most approach to the nature of God, and most exactly imitate his practice; acquiring to our selves thereby somewhat of Divinity, and becoming little Gods to our Neighbour: *Nothing* (saith St. *Chrysostome*) *maketh us so near equal to God, as beneficence*; and, *Be* (saith St. *Gregory Nazianzen*) *a God to the unfortunate, imitating the mercy of God; for a man hath nothing of God so much as to do good.* That such hath always been the common apprehension of men, the practice of all times sheweth, in that men have been ever apt to place their Benefactors among their Gods, deferring that love and veneration unto them in degrees which in perfection do appertain to the supreme Benefactor. Be merci-

Deus est mortali juvare mortalem. *Plin. Nat. H. lib. 2.*

Ἐνθὲν γὰρ ἡμᾶς ἴσους θεῷ ποιεῖ, ὡς τὸ εὐεργετεῖν. Chrys. in Matt. Orat. 35.

Γένου τῷ ἀτυχοῦντι θεὸς τὸν ἔλεον τοῦ θεοῦ μιμησάμενος· οὐδὲν γὰρ ὅπως ὡς τὸ εὖ ποιεῖν ἄνθρωπον ἔχει θεοῦ Naz Orat. 16.

Hic est vetustissimus referendi benemerentibus gratiam mos, ut tales numinibus adscribantur. *Plin.* 2. 7.

merciful, as your heavenly Father is merciful; ſo our Saviour propoſeth Gods mercy to us, both as a pattern directing, and as an argument inducing us to mercifulneſs; implying it alſo to be a good ſign declaring us the children of God; the genuine off-ſpring of the all-good and all-merciful Father; yea, that it even renders and conſtitutes us ſuch, (we thereby coming moſt truly to repreſent, and moſt nearly to reſemble him.) Our Lord farther teaches us, ſayin, *Love your enemies, bleſs them that curſe you, do good to thoſe that hate you—that you may be the ſons of your Father which is in heaven.* And they who thus are God's children, muſt conſequently be very dear to him, and moſt gracious in his ſight; he cannot but greatly like and love himſelf (the beſt of himſelf) in them; he cannot but cheriſh and treat them well, who are the faireſt and trueſt images of himſelf;

Suſcepit vita hominum, conſuetudoque communis ut beneficiis excellentes viros in cœlum famâ ac voluntate tollerent: *Cic. de N. Dat.* 2.

Luk. 6. 35, 36.

Mat 4. 44 45.

himself; no spectacle can be so pleasant to him, as to see us in our practice to act himself, doing good to one another; *as the elect of God, holy and beloved, putting on bowels of mercies and kindness, humbleness of mind, meekness, long-suffering; forbearing one another, and forgiving one another, even as Christ forgave us*; being *followers of God as dear children, and walking in love, even as Christ also loved us.* But on the other side, there is not in Nature any thing so remotely distant from God, or so extreamly opposite to him, as a greedy and griping Niggard; Hell is scarce so contrary to Heaven, as such a mans disposition to the nature of God; for 'tis goodness which sits gloriously triumphant at the top of Heaven; and *uncharitableness* lieth miserably groveling under the bottom of Hell: Heaven descends from the one, as its principal cause: Hell is built on the other,

Colos. 3. 12.

Ephes. 5. 1, 2.

other, as its main foundation: as the one approximates the bleſſed Angels to God, & beautifies them, ſo the other removeth the curſed Fiends to ſuch a diſtance from God and happineſs: not to wiſh, not to do any good, is that which renders them both ſo bad, and ſo wretched; and whoever in his conditions is ſo like to them, and in his practice ſo agrees with them, cannot but alſo be very odious to God, and extreamly unhappy; God cannot but abhor ſo baſe a degeneration from his likeneſs in thoſe, who by nature are his children, and ſhould be further ſuch according to his gracious deſign; neither can any thing more offend his eyes, than ſeeing them to uſe one another unkindly: ſo that if obtaining the certain favour of the great God, with all the benefits attending it, ſeem conſiderable to us; or if we think it adviſable to ſhun his diſpleaſure, with its ſad effects;

effects; it concerns us to practiſe theſe duties. So I conclude that ſort of Conſiderations, enforcing theſe duties, which more immediately regard God.

III. Head of Diſcourſe. Further, before we deny our relief to our poor Neighbour, let us with the eyes of our mind look on him, and attentively conſider who he is; what he is in himſelf, and what he is in relation unto us. *The righteous conſidereth the cauſe of the poor; but the wicked regardeth not to know it*, Prov. 29. 7. *Bleſſed is he that conſidereth the poor*, Pſal. 41. 1.

1. He whoſe need craves our bounty, whoſe miſery demands our mercy, what is he? He is not truly ſo mean and ſorry a thing, as the diſguiſe of misfortune, under which he appears, doth repreſent him. He who looks ſo deformedly and diſmally, who to outward ſight is ſo ill beſtead, and ſo pitifully

pitifully accoutred, hath latent in him much of admirable beauty and glory; he within himſelf containeth a nature very excellent; an immortal ſoul, and an intelligent mind, by which he nearly reſembleth God himſelf, and is comparable to Angels; he inviſibly is owner of endowments, rendring him capable of the greateſt and beſt things: What are Money and Lands? what are Silk and fine Linnen? what are Horſes and Hounds in compariſon to Reaſon, to Wiſdom, to Vertue, to Religion, which he hath, or (in deſpight of all misfortune) he may have, if he pleaſe? He whom you behold ſo dejectedly ſneaking, in ſo deſpicable a garb, ſo deſtitute of all convenience and comfort, (lying in the duſt, naked or clad with rags, meager with hunger or pain) he comes of a moſt high and heavenly extraction; he was born a Prince, the Son of the greateſt King

King Eternal; he can truly call the Soveraign Lord of all the World, his Father, having derived his ſoul from the mouth, having had his body formed by the hands of God himſelf: (in this, *The rich and poor*, as the Wiſe-man ſaith, *do meet together; the Lord is the Maker of them all.*) That ſame forlorn Wretch, whom we are ſo apt to deſpiſe and trample upon, was framed and conſtituted Lord of the viſible World; had all the goodly brightneſſes of Heaven, and all the coſtly furnitures of Earth created to ſerve him: *Thou madeſt him*, (ſaith the *Pſalmiſt* of man) *to have dominion over the works of thine hands; thou haſt put all things under his feet:* Yea, he was made an inhabitant of Paradiſe, and Profeſſour of felicities ſuperlative; had immortal life, and endleſs joy in his hand; did enjoy the entire favour and friendſhip of the moſt High: ſuch in worth

Prov. 22. 2.

Gen. 1. 28.

Pſal. 8. 6.

worth of Nature, and nobleneſs of Birth he is, as a man; and highly more conſiderable he is, as a Chriſtian; for as vile and contemptible as he looks, God hath ſo regarded and prized him, as for his ſake to deſcend from Heaven, to cloath himſelf with fleſh, to aſſume the form of a ſervant; for his good to undertake and undergo the greateſt inconveniences, infirmities, wants and diſgraces; the moſt grievous troubles, and moſt ſharp pains incident to mortal nature; God hath adopted him to be his Child; the Son of God hath deigned to call him Brother; he is a Member of Chriſt, a Temple of the Holy Ghoſt, a free Denizon of the heavenly City; an Heir of Salvation, and Candidate of eternal Glory; the greateſt and richeſt Perſonage is not capable of better Priviledges, than God hath granted him, or of higher preferments, than God hath deſigned him

him to: He equally with the mightieſt Prince is the object of God's eſpecial Providence and Grace, of his continual regard and care, of his fatherly love and affection; who, as good *Elihu* ſaith, *accepteth not the perſons of Princes, nor regardeth the rich more than the poor; for they are all the work of his hands.* In fine, this poor Creature whom thou ſeeſt, is a man, and a Chriſtian, thine equal, who ever thou art, in nature, and thy peer in condition; I ſay not in the uncertain and unſtable gifts of fortune, not in this worldly ſtate, which is very inconſiderable; but in gifts vaſtly more precious, in title to an eſtate infinitely more rich and excellent: yea, if thou art vain and proud, be ſober and humble; he is thy better, in true dignity much to be preferred before thee, far in real wealth ſurpaſſing thee: for, *Better is the poor that walketh in his up-*

Job 34. 19.

ἐννόησον, ὅτι ὁ μοίως σοι ἐλεύθερός ἐστι καὶ τῆς αὐτῆς σοι κοινωνεῖ εὐγενείας, καὶ πάντα σοι κοινὰ κέκτηται. Chryſ. in Heb. Orat. 2.

Οἱ τοίνυν ἐν τοῖς πνευματικοῖς τοσούτῳ ἔχοντες ἰσοπμίαν, πόθεν μέγα φρονεῖτε; ὅτι ὁ δεῖνα πλούσιος, καὶ ὁ δεῖνα ἰσχυρός, Chriſ. in *Eph.* 4. 4. *Joh.* Orat. 15.

ἢ τῷ πνεύματος χάεις ὁμοτίμως ποιεῖ τὺς ὁμόφρονας. Naz. Orat. 23.

Eccl. 10. 24.

uprightness, than he that is perverse in his ways, though he be rich. Prov. 28. 6.

2. That distinction which thou standest upon, and which seemeth so vast between thy poor Neighbour and thee, what is it? whence did it come? whither tends it? It is not any-wise natural, or according to primitive design: for as all men are in faculties and endowments of nature equal, so were they all originally equal in condition, all wealthy and happy, all constituted in a most prosperous and plentiful estate; all things at first were promiscuously exposed to the use and enjoyment of all; every one from the common stock assuming as his own what he needed. Inequality and private interest in things, (together with sicknesses and pains, together with all other infelicities and inconveniences) were the by-blows of our Fall; sin introduced these degrees and distances; it

Πενία καὶ πλοῦτος. ἐγεύθερία τε, ἣν φαμὲν καὶ δουλεία, καὶ τὰ τοιαῦτα τῶν ὀνομάτων, ὕστερον ἐπεισῆλθεν τῷ γένει τῶν ἀνθρώπων, ὥσπερ ἀρρωστήματα τῇ κακίᾳ συνεισπεσόντα κακείνης ὄντα ἐπινοήματα. Greg. Nat. Orat. 6.

it devised the names of rich and poor; it begot these ingrossings and inclosures of things; it forged those two small pestilent words, *meum* and *tuum*, which have engendred so much strife among men, and created so much mischief in the world: these preternatural distinctions were (I say) brooded by our fault, and are in great part fostered and maintained thereby; for were we generally so good, so just, so charitable as we should be, they could hardly subsist, especially in that measure they do. God indeed (for promoting some good ends, and for prevention of some mischiefs, apt to spring from our ill nature in this our lapsed state; particularly to prevent the strife and disorder which scrambling would cause among men, presu-

τὸ γὰρ ἐμὸν, καὶ τὸ σὸν, τοῦτο τὸ ψυχρὸν ῥῆμα καὶ μυρίους πολέμους εἰς τὴν οἰκουμένην εἰσαγαγὸν, &c. Chrys. Tom. V. λογ. νδ. & in Act. 2. 47.

Natura omnia omnibus in commune profudit; sic enim Deus generari jussit omnia, ut pastus omnibus communis esset, & terra foret omnium quædam communis possessio. Natum igitur jus commune generavit, usurpatio jus fecit privatum. *Ambros. Offic.* c. 28.

καὶ γὰρ εἰ μὲν ἀνριβείας τοῦτο ἐφυλάττετο ὁ δοῦλος, οὐκ ἐλεύθερος ἦν, οὐκ ἀρχὼν οὐκ ἀρχόμενος, ὁ πλούσιος, ὁ πένης, ὁ μικρὸς, ὁ μέγας, ὁ διάβολος ἂν ἐγνώσθη ποτὶ. Chrys. in 1 Cor. Or. 32.

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ming on equal right, and parity of force) doth suffer them in some manner to continue, and enjoyns us a contented submission to them; but we mistake, if we think that natural equality and community are in effect quite taken away; or that all the world is so cantonized among some few, that the rest have no share therein; No, every man hath still a competent patrimony due to him, and a sufficient provision made for his tolerable subsistence; God hath brought no man hither to be necessarily starved, or pinched with extream want; but hath assigned to every one a Childs portion, in some fair way to be obtained by him, either by legal right, or by humble request, which according to conscience ought to have effect. No man therefore is allowed to detain, or to destroy superfluously what another man apparently wants, but is obliged to impart

Ὥσπερ ἂν εἴ τις ἐν θεάτρῳ θεὰν καταλαβὼν εἶτα εἰσείργοι τοὺς ἐπεισιόντας ἴδιον ἑαυτοῦ κρίνων τὸ κοινὸν πᾶσι κτῆ τὴν χρῆσιν προκείμενον. τοιοῦτοί εἰσι καὶ οἱ πλούσιοι· τὰ καὶ κοινὰ προκατάσχοντες ἰδιοποιοῦνται διὰ τὴν πρόληψιν. Basil. M.

Incassùm se innocentes putant, qui commune Dei munus sibi privatum vindicant. *Greg. M.*

it to him: so that rich men are indeed but the Treasurers, the Stew-
Mat. 24. 45. ards, the Caterers of God for the rest of men, having a strict charge
Luk. 12.42. to *dispense unto every one his meat in due season*, and no just priviledge to withhold it from any: the honour of distribution is conferred on them, as a reward of their fidelity and care; the right of enjoyment is reserved to the poor, as a provision for their necessity. Thus hath God wisely projected, that all his Children should both effectually and quietly be provided for; and that none of them should be oppressed with penury;
2 Cor. 8. 14. so that (as St. *Paul* hath it) *One mans abundance should supply another mans want, that there may be an equality:* for since no man can enjoy more than he needs, and every man should have so much as he needs, there can be really no great inequality among men; the distinction will scarce remain

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other-where than in fancy. What the Philoſopher ſaid of himſelf, *What I have is ſo mine, that it is every mans*, is according to the practice of each man, who is truly and in due meaſure charitable; whereby that ſeemingly enormous diſcrimination among men is well moderated, and the equity of Divine Providence is vindicated: But he that ravenouſly graſps far more than he can well uſe, and gripes it faſt into his clutches, ſo that the needy in their diſtreſs cannot come by it, doth pervert that equity which God hath eſtabliſhed in things, defeats his good intention, (ſo far as he can) and brings a ſcandal on his Providence; and ſo doing is highly both injurious and impious.

Ego mea ſic habeo, ut omnium ſint. *Demetrius apud Sen de Benef. VII. 10.*

Ὁσάκις τὸν πλησίον ὡς ἑαυτὸν, οὐδὲν πλεονεκτότερον ἔχεις τοῦ πλησίον. *Baſil M.*

3. It was alſo (which we ſhould conſider) even one main end of this difference among us, permitted and ordered by God's Providence, that as ſome mens induſtry

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and the poor gratefully ſervi

Διὰ τί σὺ μὲν πλούσιος· ἐκεῖνος δὲ πένης; ἢ πάντως ἵνα σὺ χρηστότητος καὶ πίστεως οἰκονομίας μισθὸν ἀπολάβῃς, κἀκεῖνος τοῖς μεγάλοις ἄθλοις τῆς ἀπομονῆς τιμηθῇ. Bas. M. πλοῦτον καὶ πενίαν, τοῖς ἀνθρώποις διένειμεν ὁ τῶν ὅλων δημιουργὸς τε καὶ προστάτης ἐκ ἀδίκῳ ψήφῳ χρησάμενος, ἀλλ' ἀφορμὴν ὠφελείας τοῖς πλουσίοις παρέχων τῶν πενήτων τὴν ἐνδειαν. Theod. Ep. 23.

the rich. Wherefore by neglecting theſe duties, we unadviſedly croſs the good purpoſe of God toward us, depriving our ſelves of the chief advantages our wealth may afford.

4. We ſhould alſo do well to conſider, that a poor man, even as ſuch, is not to be diſregarded, and that poverty it ſelf is no ſuch contemptible thing as we may be prone to imagine: there are Conſiderations, which may qualifie Poverty even to diſpute the place with Wealth, and to claim precedence to it: If the world vulgarly doth account, and call the rich man happy, a better Author hath pronounced the poor man ſuch: *Bleſſed are the poor*, doth march in the van of the Beatitudes, and a reaſon goeth along therewith, which aſſerteth its right to the place, *for theirs is the Kingdom of Heaven*; for that they are not only in an equal capacity as men, Luke 6. 20.

but in a nearer disposition as poor to the acquisition of that blissful state; for that poverty (the Mistress of Sobriety and honest Industry, the Mother of Humility and Patience, the Nurse of all Vertue) renders men more willing to go, and more expedite in the way toward Heaven; by it also we conform unto the Son of God himself, the Heir of Eternal Majesty, the Saviour of the World,

2 Cor. 8. 9. *who for our sake became poor,* (δι' ἡμᾶς ἐπτώχευσε, for our sake became a beggar) *that we through his poverty* (or beggary) *might become rich:* he willingly chose, he especially dignified and sanctified that depth of poverty, which we so proudly slight and loath. The greatest Princes and Potentates in the World, the most wealthy and haughty of us all, but for one poor Beggar had been irrecoverably miserable: to Poverty it is, that every one of us doth

ow

owe all the possibility there is, all the hopes we can have of our Salvation; and shall we then ingraefully requite it with scorn, or with pitiless neglect? shall we presume in the person of any poor man, to abhor or contemn the very poor, but most holy and most happy *JESUS*, our Lord and Redeemer? No; if we will do Poverty right, we must rather for his dear sake and memory defer an especial respect and veneration thereto.

Dedignatur aliquis paupertatem, cujus tam claræ imagines sunt? *Sen. Consol. ad Helv.* 12.

5. Thus a due reflection on the poor man himself, his nature and state, will induce us to succour; but let us also consider him as related unto our selves: Every such person is our near Kinsman, is our Brother, is by indissoluble bands of cognation in blood, and agreement in Nature knit and united to us. We are all but several streams issuing from one source, several twigs sprouting

Nemo est in genere humano, cui non dilectio, etsi non pro mutua charitate, pro ipsa tamen communis naturæ societate debetur. *Aug. Epist.* 121.

from one ſtock; *One blood*, derived through ſeveral channels; one ſubſtance, by miraculous efficacy of the Divine Benediction, multiplyed or dilated unto ſeveral times and places. We are all faſhioned according to the ſame orignal Idea, reſembling God our common Father; we are all endowed with the ſame faculties, inclinations and affections; we all conſpire in the ſame eſſential ingredients of our conſtitution, and in the more notable adjuncts thereof; it is only ſome inconſiderable accidents, (ſuch as age, place, figure, ſtature, colour, garb) which diverſify and diſtinguiſh us; in which, according to ſucceſſions of time and chance, we commonly no leſs differ from our ſelves, than we do at preſent from them: ſo that in effect and reaſonable eſteem, every man is not only our Brother, but (as *Ariſtotle* ſaith of a friend)

Act. 17. 26. Οἰκεῖον πᾶς ἄνθρωπος ἀνθρώπῳ καὶ φίλον. Ariſt.

Ἐν ἀλλοτρίοις πάθεσι θεραπευτέον τὸ συγγενὲς, καὶ ὁμόδουλον. Greg. Naz.

ἄλλος

ἄλλος αὐτὸς, *another ones ſelf*; is not only our moſt lively image, but in a manner our very ſubſtance; another our ſelf under a ſmall variation of preſent circumſtances: the moſt of diſtinction between us and our poor Neighbour, conſiſts in exteriour ſhew, in moveable attire, in caſual appendages to the nature of man; ſo that really when we uſe him well, we are kind to our ſelves, when we yield him courteous regard, we bear reſpect to our own nature; when we feed and comfort him, we do ſuſtain and cheriſh a member of our own body: but when we are cruel or harſh to him, we abuſe our ſelves; when we ſcorn him, we lay diſparagement and diſgrace on mankind it ſelf; when we withhold ſuccour or ſuſtenance from him, we do (as the Prophet ſpeaketh) *hide our ſelves from our own fleſh*; we ſtarve a part of our own body, and wither a branch of

Nihil eſt unum uni tam ſimile, tam par, quàm omnes inter noſmetipſos ſumus. *Cic. de Leg.* 1.

Iſa. 58. 7.

of our ſtock: immoderate ſelfiſhneſs ſo blindeth us, that we overſee and forget our ſelves: it is in this, as it is in other good ſenſes, true what the Wiſe-man ſaith,

Prov. 11. 17. *The merciful man doth good to his own ſoul; but he that is cruel, troubleth his own fleſh.*

6. Further, as the poor man is ſo nearly allied to us by ſociety of common nature, ſo is he more ſtrictly joyned to us by the bands of ſpiritual Conſanguinity. All Chriſtians (high and low, rich and poor) are children of the ſame heavenly Father, ſpring from the ſame incorruptible ſeed, are regenerated to the ſame lively hope, are Co-heirs of the ſame heavenly inheritance; are all members of one body, (*members* ſaith St. *Paul, one of another*) and animated by one holy Spirit: which relation, as it is the moſt noble, and the moſt cloſe that can be, ſo it ſhould breed the greateſt endearments, and

Rom. 12. 5. *Are all one*; Gal. 3. 28. πάντες γὰρ ὑμεῖς εἷς ἐστε ἐν χριστῷ ἰησοῦ. Chryſ. in Joh. Or. 15.

and ſhould expreſs it ſelf in correſpondent effects; it ſhould render us full of affection and ſympathy one toward another; it ſhould make us to tender the needs, and feel the ſufferings of any Chriſtian as our own; it ſhould diſpoſe us freely to communicate what ever we have, how precious ſoever, to any of our brethren: this holy friendſhip ſhould eſtabliſh a charitable equality and community among us, both in point of honour and of eſtate: for ſince all things conſiderable are common unto us, ſince we are all purchaſed and purified by the ſame precious blood, ſince we all partake of the ſame precious faith, of the ſame high calling, of the ſame honourable priviledges, of the ſame glorious promiſes and hopes; ſince we all have the ſame Lord and Saviour; why ſhould theſe ſecular trifles be ſo private and particular among us?

Φίλων γὰρ ἁπάντων ἴδιον, ὅσσοις φίλος ὀρθῶς πεφυκας', ἀλλὰ κοινὰ χρήματα. Eurip. Androm.

Why

Why ſhould not ſo huge a parity in thoſe only valuable things not wholly (I ſay not in worldly ſtate, or outward appearance, ſuch as the preſervation of order in ſecu-
Coloſ. 3. 11. lar affairs requireth, but) in our opinion and affection extinguiſh that ſlight diſtinction of *rich* and *poor*, in concernments temporal? How can we ſlight ſo noble, ſo great a Perſonage as a Chriſtian, for wanting a little droſs? How
Heb. 2. 11. Mat. 25. 40. Joh. 15. 14. can we deem our ſelves much his ſuperiour, upon ſo petty an advantage, for having that, which is not worth ſpeaking or thinking of, in compariſon to what he enjoyeth? Our Lord himſelf is not aſhamed to call the leaſt among us his Brother, and his Friend; and ſhall we then diſdain to yield to ſuch an one the regard, and treatment ſuitable to ſuch a Quality? Shall we not honour any Brother of our Lord? ſhall we not be civil and kind to any Friend

Friend of his? If we do not, how can we pretend to bear any true reſpect or affection unto himſelf? It is his expreſs precept, that the greateſt among us ſhould, in imitation of his moſt humble and charitable Self, be ready to ſerve the meaneſt; and, that we ſhould *in honour prefer one another*, and *in lowlineſs of mind eſteem others better than our ſelves*, are Apoſtolical Rules, extending indifferently to rich and poor, which are plainly violated by diſregarding the poor. Yea, this relation ſhould, according to St. *John's* Doctrine, diſpoſe us not only freely to impart theſe temporal goods, but even, if occaſion be, willingly to expoſe our very lives for our brethren: *Hereby*, ſaith he, *we perceive the love of God, becauſe he laid down his life for us; and we ought to lay down our lives for our brethren.* How greatly then are they deficient from their duty, how

Mat. 20. 26.

Rom. 12. 10. Phil. 2. 3.

1 Joh. 3. 16.

how little in truth are they Christians, who are unwilling to part with the very superfluities and excrements of their fortune for the relief of a poor Christian? Thus considering our Brother, may breed in us charitable dispositions toward him, and induce us to the practice of these duties.

IV. Head of Discourse. Moreover, if we reflect upon our selves, and consider either our nature, or our state here, we cannot but observe many strong engagements to the same practice.

1. The very constitution, frame and temper of our nature, directeth and inclineth us thereto; whence by observing those duties, we observe our own nature, we improve it, we advance it to the best perfection it is capable of; by neglecting them, we thwart, we impair, we debase the same——

Juven. Sat. 15. ——*hæc nostri pars optima sensus*; The best of our natural inclinations (those

those sacred reliques of God's Image originally stamped on our minds) do sensibly prompt, and vehemently urge us to mercy and pity: the very same bowels, which in our own want do by a lively sense of pain inform us thereof, and instigate us to provide for its relief, do also grievously resent the distresses of another, admonishing us thereby, and provoking us to yield him succour. Such is the natural sympathy between men, (discernable in all, but appearing most vigorous in the best natures) that we cannot see, cannot hear of, yea can hardly imagine the calamities of other men, without being somewhat disturbed, and afflicted our selves. As also Nature, to the acts requisite toward preservation of our life, hath annexed a sensible pleasure, forcibly enticing us to the performance of them: so hath she made the communication of benefits to others, to

——Mutuus ut nos Affectus petere auxilium & præstare juberat. *Juven.* 16.

Φιλόπτωχον καὶ συμπαθὲς τὸ τῶν ἀνθρώπων γένος. Arch. ad Mon. 852.

to be accompanied with a very delicious relish upon the mind of him that practises it; nothing indeed carrying with it a more pure and savory delight than Beneficence. A man may be vertuously voluptuous, and a laudable Epicure by doing much good; for to receive good, even in the judgment of *Epicurus* himself, (the great Patron of Pleasure) is no wise so pleasant as to do it: God and Nature therefore within us do sollicite the poor man's case; even our own ease and satisfaction demand from us compassion and kindness towards him; by exercising them, we hearken to Natures wise Disciplines, & comply with her kindly Instincts; we cherish good humour, and sweeten our complexion; so ennobling our minds, we become not only more like to God, but more perfectly men; by the contrary practice we rebel against the Laws, and pervert the

Ἐπίκουρος τὸ εὖ πάσχειν τοῦ εὖ ποιεῖν οὐ μόνον κάλλιον, ἀλλὰ καὶ ἥδιον εἶναι φησί. *Plut. de Philos. conv. cum Princ.*

the due course of our Nature; we do weaken, corrupt and stifle that which is best in us; we harden and stupifie our souls; so monstrously degenerating from the perfection of our kind, and becoming rather like savage beasts, than sociable men; yea, somewhat worse perhaps than many beasts; for commonly Brutes will combine to the succour of one another; they will defend and help those of the same kind.

2. And if the sensitive part within us doth suggest so much, the rational dictates more unto us; that heavenly faculty, having capacities so wide, and so mighty energies, was surely not created to serve mean or narrow designs; it was not given us to scrape eternally in earth, or to amass heaps of clay for private enjoyment; for the service of one puny creature, for the sustenance or satis-

faction of a ſingle carcaſe: 'tis much below an intelligent perſon to weary himſelf with ſervile toils, and diſtract his mind with ignoble cares for concernments ſo low and ſcanty; but to regard and purſue the common good of men; to diſpence, adviſe and aid, where need requires; to diffuſe its vertue all about in beneficial effects; theſe are Operations worthy of Reaſon, theſe are employments congruous to the native excellency of that Divine Power implanted in us; ſuch performances declare indeed what a man is, whence he ſprang, and whither he tends.

3. Further, examining our ſelves, we may alſo obſerve, that we are in reality, what our poor Neighbour appears to be, in many reſpects no leſs indigent and impotent than he: we no leſs, yea far more, for our ſubſiſtance depend upon the arbitrary bounty of another, than he ſeemeth to relie upon

upon ours. We as defectible creatures do continually want ſupport; we as grievous ſinners do always need mercy; every moment we are contracting huge debts, far beyond our ability to diſcharge; debts of gratitude for benefits received, debts of guilt for offences committed; we therefore perpetually ſtand obliged to be craving for mercy and relief at the Gates of Heaven. We all, from Prince to Peaſant, live meerly upon alms, and are moſt really in condition Beggars: *to pray always*, is a duty incumbent on us from the condition of our nature, as well as by the command of God. Such a likeneſs in ſtate ſhould therfore diſpoſe us to ſuccour our fellows, and δανείζειν θεῷ ἔλεον ἐλέους χρήζοντας, *to lend mercy to God, who need mercy from him*, as the good Father ſpeaketh. We ſhould (as the Apoſtle adviſes and argues) *Remember them that are in bonds*, Heb. 13 3. Greg. Naz.

as bound with them; and them which suffer adversity, as being our selves also in the body; as being companions in necessity, or subject to the like distress. If we daily receive mercy and relief, yet unmindful of our obligation to God, refuse them to others, shall we not deserve to hear that dreadful exprobration, *O thou wicked servant, I forgave thee all that debt because thou desiredst me; shouldest not thou also have had compassion on thy fellow-servant, even as I had pity on thee?*

Mat. 18.32,33.

Ὅμως δ' ἔνεστι τοῖσιν εὖ Σκοπουμένοις Ταρβεῖν τὸν εὖ πράσσοντα μὴ Σφαλῆ ποτέ. Siphin. Trachi.

4. The great incertainty, and instability of our condition, doth also require our consideration. We that now flourish in a fair and full estate, may soon be in the case of that poor creature, who now sues for our relief; we that this day enjoy the wealth of *Job*, may the morrow need his patience; there are *Sabeans*, which may come and drive away our cattel;

tel; there are tempeſts, which may ariſe, and ſmite down our houſes; there is a fire of God, which may fall from Heaven, and conſume our ſubſtance; a meſſenger of all theſe miſchiefs may, for all we know, be preſently at our doors; it happened ſo to a better man than we, as unexpectedly and with as ſmall ground to fear it, as it can arrive to us: all our wealth is ſurrounded with dangers, and expoſed to caſualties innumerable; Violence may ſnatch it from us, Treachery may cheat us of it; Miſchance may ſeize thereon, a ſecret Moth may devour it; the wiſdom of Providence for our trial, or its juſtice for our puniſhment, may bereave us thereof; its own light and fluid nature (if no other accemptable cauſes were apparent) might eaſily ſerve to waft it from us; for, *Riches* (ſaith the Wiſe-man) *make themſelves wings*, (they it ſeems do Prov. 23. 5.

need no help for that) *and fly away like as an Eagle toward Heaven*; that is, of their own accord they do ſwiftly convey themſelves away, out of our ſight, and beyond our reach: they are but wind, *What profit* (ſays the Preacher) *hath he that laboureth for the wind?* for wind, that is, for a thing which can no wiſe be fixed or ſetled in one corner; which therefore 'tis a vanity to conceive, that we can ſurely appropriate, or long retain. How then can we think to ſtand firm upon a place ſo ſlippery? How can we build any confidence on a bottom ſo looſe and brittle? How can we ſuffer our minds to be ſwell'd up, like bubbles, with vain conceit, by the breath of ſuch things, more fleeting and vertiginous than any Air? againſt the precepts of the wiſeſt and beſt men: *If riches increaſe*, ſaith the Pſalmiſt, *ſet not your heart* on them: *Wilt thou ſet thine*

Eccleſ. 5. 21.

Pſal. 62. 10.

Prov. 23. 5.

thine eyes upon that which is not? ſaith the Wiſe-man: (that is, wilt thou regard that which is ſo tranſitory and evanid, that it hardly may be deemed real; which we can ſcarce look on, before it is gone?) and, *Charge them* (ſaith St. *Paul*) *that are rich in this world, that they be not high minded, nor truſt in uncertain riches:* ὅτι πλούτου ἀδηλότητι, in the obſcurity, or inevidence of riches; things which we can never plainly diſcern how long we ſhall keep them, how much we can enjoy them) what ſhould make us unwilling with certain advantages to our ſelves, freely to let that go, which preſently without our leave may forſake us? How can we reaſonably judge our caſe much different from that of the pooreſt body, when as in a trice we may perhaps change places and perſons; when the ſcene turning, he may be advanced unto our wealth, we

καὶ γὰρ ἐσχάτης ἀνοίας ἂν εἴη ὧν καὶ ἄκοντες ἐξίσασθαι μέλλομεν ἑτέροις τούτων μὴ μεταδιδόναι ἑκόντας τοῖς δεομένοις; Chryſ. Tom. 5. Or. 55.

may be depreſſed into his want? ſince every Age yieldeth inſtances of ſome *Græſus*, ſome *Polycrates*, ſome *Pompey*, ſome *Job*, ſome *Nebuchodonoſor*, who within a ſmall compaſs of time doth appear to all men the object both of admiration and pity, is to the leſs wiſe the mark both of envy and ſcorn; ſeeing every day preſenteth unexpected viciſſitudes; the Sea of Humane Affairs continually ebbing and flowing, now rolling on this, now on the other ſhore its reſtleſs waves of profit and credit; ſince eſpecially there is a God, who arbitrarily diſpoſeth things, and with a turn of his hand changeth the ſtate of men; who, as the Scripture ſaith, *Maketh rich and poor, bringeth low and liſteth up; poureth contempt upon Princes; raiſeth the poor out of the duſt, and liſteth the beggar from the dunghil, to ſet them among Princes and to make them inherit the throne of glo-*

Sejanus—quo die illum Senatus deduxerat, populus in fruſta diviſit. *Sen. de tranq.* 2.

1 Sam. 2. 7. Job 12. 21. Pſal. 107. 41. 113. 7.

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ry: ſeeing, I ſay, apparently ſuch is the condition of things here, that we may ſoon need his pity and help, who now requeſteth ours, why ſhould we not be very ready to afford them to him? why ſhould we not gladly embrace our opportunity, and uſe our turn well; becoming aforehand with others, and preventing their reciprocal contempt or neglect of us hereafter? *Caſt thy bread upon the waters, for thou ſhalt find it after many days; give a portion to ſeven, and alſo unto eight, for thou knoweſt not what evil ſhall be upon the earth:* that is, conſidering the inconſtancy and uncertainty of affairs here, and what adverſity may befal thee, be liberal upon all occaſions, and thou ſhalt (even a good while after) find returns of thy liberality upon thee: ſo the Wiſe-man adviſes, and ſo Wiſdom certainly dictates that we ſhould do. Eccleſ. 11. 1.

5. And

5. And equity doth exact no leſs: for were any of us in the needy mans plight, (as eaſily we may be reduced thereto) we ſhould believe our caſe deſerved commiſeration; we ſhould importunately demand relief; we ſhould be grievouſly diſpleaſed at a repulſe; we ſhould apprehend our ſelves very hardly dealt with, and ſadly we ſhould complain of inhumanity and cruelty, if ſuccour were refuſed to us. In all equity therefore we ſhould be apt to miniſter the ſame to others; for nothing can be more unreaſonable or unjuſt, than to require or expect that from another, which in a like caſe we are unwilling to render unto him; it is a plain deviation from that Fundamental Rule, which is the Baſe of all Juſtice; and virtually the ſum (as our Saviour telleth us) of whatever is preſcribed us: *All things whatſoever ye would that men ſhould*

Beneficium qui dare neſcit, injuſtè petit. *Laber. Mim.*

Mat. 7. 12.

ſhould do to you, do ye even ſo to them; for this is the Law and the Prophets. I add, that upon theſe Conſiderations, by unmerciful dealing, we put our ſelves into a very bad and tickliſh condition; wholly depending upon the conſtancy of that which is moſt inconſtant; ſo that if our fortune do fail, we can neither reaſonably hope for, nor juſtly pretend to any relief or comfort from others. *He that doth good turns is mindful of that which may come hereafter, and when he falleth he ſhall find a ſtay.* Eccleſ. 3. 31.

6. We ſhould alſo remember concerning our ſelves, that we are mortal and frail. Were we immortal, or could we probably retain our Poſſeſſions for ever in our hands; yea, could we foreſee ſome definite ſpace of time, conſiderably long, in which we might aſſuredly enjoy our ſtores, it might ſeem ſomewhat excuſable

to

to ſcrape hard, and to hold faſt; to do ſo might look like rational Providence: but ſince *Riches are not for ever, nor doth the Crown endure to all generations*, (as the Wiſe-man ſpeaketh) ſince they muſt infallibly be ſoon left, and there is no certainty of keeping them for any time; 'tis very unaccomptable why we ſhould ſo greedily ſeek them, and hug them ſo fondly. *The rich man*, ſaith St. *James, as the flower of the graſs, ſhall paſs away:* it is his ſpecial doom *to fade away* ſuddenly; it is obvious why in many reſpects he is ſomewhat more than others obnoxious to the fatal ſtroke, and upon ſpecial accompts of juſtice he may be further more expoſed thereto; conſidering the caſe of the rich fool in the Goſpel, we may eaſily diſcern them; we ſhould reckon, that it may happen to us, as it did there to him; that after we have reared great Barns, and

Prov. 27. 24.

Jam. 1. 10, 11.

Luk. 12. 20.

and *ſtored up much goods for many years*, our *ſoul this very night* may be *required of us*; however, if it be uncertain when, it is moſt certain, that after a very ſhort time our thred will be ſpun out; then ſhall we be rifled, and quite ſtript of all; becoming ſtark naked, as when we came into the world: we ſhall not carry with us one grain of our gliſtering Metals, or one rag of our gaudy Stuff; our ſtately Houſes, our fine Gardens, and our ſpacious Walks, muſt all be exchanged for a cloſe Hole under-ground; we muſt for ever bid farewel to our Pomps and Magnificences, to our Feaſts and Jollities, to our Sports and Paſtimes; not one of all our numerous and ſplendid retinue; no Companion of our Pleaſure, no Admirer of our Fortune, no Flatterer of our Vices can wait upon us; deſolate and unattended we muſt go down into the Chambers

1 Tim. 6. 7. Eccleſ. 5. 15. Job. 1. 21.

Iſai. 14. 11.

bers of darkneſs; then ſhall we find, that to die rich (as men are wont improperly to ſpeak) is really to die moſt poor; that to have carefully kept our Money, is to have loſt it utterly; that by leaving much, we do indeed leave worſe than nothing: To have been wealthy, if we have been illiberal and unmerciful, will be no advantage or ſatisfaction to us after we are gone hence; yea, it will be the cauſe of huge damage, and bitter regret unto us: All our Treaſures will not procure us any favour, or purchaſe one Advocate for us in that impartial World; yea, it ſhall be they which will there proſecute us with clamorous accuſations, will bear ſore teſtimony againſt us, (*The ruſt of them*, ſaith St. *James*, *ſhall be a witneſs againſt us*, ſignifying our unjuſt or uncharitable detention of them) will obtain a moſt heavy ſentence upon us; they will render

Jam. 5. 3.
Luk. 16. 25. 6. 24. 12. 21. Math. 25. 30. Jam. 5. 5.

render our audit more difficult, and enflame our reckoning; they will aggravate the guilt of our ſins with imputations of unfaithfulneſs and ingratitude; ſo with their load they will preſs us deeper into perdition: to omit, that having ſo ill managed them, we ſhall leave them behind us as marks of obloquy, and monuments of infamy upon our memories; for ordinarily of ſuch a rich perſon it is true, that *Job* ſays of him, *Men ſhall clap their hands at him, and ſhall hiſs him out of his place*; like one, who departs from off this ſtage, after having very ill acted his part. Is it not therefore infinitely better to prevent this being neceſſarily and unprofitably deprived of our goods, by ſeaſonably diſpoſing them ſo, as may conduce to our benefit, and our comfort, and our honour; being very indifferent and unconcerned in our affection toward them;

1. Tim. 6. 9.

Job. 27. 19, 23.

τῆς γὰρ ἐσχάτης ἀνοίας ἐστὶν ἀφεῖναί τι τῶν ἡμετέρων ἀναπεμεῖναι ἐνταῦθα, ἡμῶν μικρὸν ὕστερον μελλόντων ἐντεῦθεν ἀποδημεῖν. καὶ γὰρ ὅπερ ἀπολειφθῆναι ξημία γίνεται· πάντα τοίνυν ἐκεῖ πεμπώμεθα, ἔνθα καὶ ἡμεῖς διατρίβειν μέλλομεν λοιπόν. Chryſ. Tom. V. Orat. 54.

them; modeſt and humble in our conceits about them; moderate and ſober in our enjoyments of them; contented upon any reaſonable occaſion to loſe or leave them; and eſpecially moſt ready to diſpenſe them in that beſt way, which God hath preſcribed, according to the exigencies of Humanity and Charity? By thus ordering our Riches, we ſhall render them benefits and bleſſings to us; we ſhall by them procure ſure friendſhip and favour, great worſhip and reſpect in the other World; having ſo lived (in the exerciſe of bounty and mercy) we ſhall truly die rich, and in effect carry all our goods along with us, or rather we have thereby ſent them before us; having, like wiſe Merchants, tranſmitted and drawn them by a moſt ſafe conveyance into our Country and Home; where infallibly we ſhall find them, and with everlaſting

Luk. 16. 9.

lasting content enjoy them. So considering our selves, and our state, will dispose us to the practice of these duties.

Furthermore, if we contemplate our Wealth it self, we may therein discry great motives to bounty. V. Head of Discourse.

1. Thus to employ our Riches, is really the best use they are capable of; not only the most innocent, most worthy, most plausible; but the most safe, most pleasant, most advantagious, and consequently in all respects most prudent way of disposing them. To keep them close without using or enjoying them at all, is a most sottish extravagance, or a strange kind of madness; a man thence affecting to be rich, quite impoverisheth himself, dispossesseth himself of all, and alienateth from himself his Estate: his Gold is no more his, than when it was in the *Indies*, or lay hid in the Mines; his Corn is no more his, than if it stood

Σχορπιζόμενος ὁ πλοῦτος πέφυκε παραμένειν συνεχόμενος ἀλλοτριοῦται. Basil. M. Tam deest avaro quod habet, quàm quod non habet.

growing in *Arabia* or *China*; he is no more owner of his Lands, than he is Master of *Jeruſalem*, or *Grand-Cairo*: for what difference is there, whether diſtance of place or baſeneſs of mind ſever things from him? whether his own heart, or another mans hand detain them from his uſe? whether he hath them not at all, or hath them to no purpoſe? whether one is a beggar out of neceſſity, or by choice? is preſſed to want, or a Volunteer thereto? Such an one may fancy himſelf rich, and others, wiſe as himſelf, may repute him ſo; but ſo diſtracted perſons to themſelves and to one another do ſeem great Princes, and ſtile themſelves ſuch; with as much reaſon almoſt he might pretend to be wiſe, or to be good. Riches are χρήματα, things whoſe nature conſiſts in uſefulneſs; abſtract that, they become nothing, things of no conſideration or value; he that

καὶ γὰρ χρήματα διὰ τοῦτο λέγεται, ἵνα χατυρύξωμεν, ἀλλ' ἵνα εἰς δέον αὐτοῖς χρησώμεθα. Chryſ. in Mat. Orat. 49.

that hath them, is no more concerned in them than he that hath them not: it is the heart and skill to uſe affluence of things wiſely and nobly, which makes it wealth, and conſtitutes him rich that hath it; otherwiſe the Cheſts may be cramm'd, and the Barns ſtuffed full, while the man is miſerably poor and beggarly; 'tis in this ſenſe true, which the Wiſe-man ſays, *There is that maketh himſelf rich, yet hath nothing.* But the very having Riches (will ſuch a man ſay) is matter of Reputation; men do eſteem and honour him that hath them: true, if he knows how, and hath the mind to uſe them well, otherwiſe all the credit they yield conſiſts in making their Maſter ridiculous to wiſe men, and infamous among all men: but, putting caſe that any ſhould be ſo fooliſh as to reſpect us meerly for ſeeming rich, why ſhould we accommodate

Deſunt inopi multa, avaro omnia. *Sen. Ep.* 108.

Prov. 13. 7.

our practice to their vain opinion, or be base our selves because others are not wise? But however, (may he say again) it is a pleasant thing to see them; a heap of Gold is the most lovely spectacle that one can behold; it does a mans heart good to view an abundance of good things about him. For this plea indeed he hath a good Author; this it should seem was all the benefit the Wiseman observed in them, accruing to such persons: *What good*, saith he, *is there to the owners thereof, saving the beholding of them with their eyes?* But if this be all they are good for, it is, one would think, a very slim benefit they afford, little able to ballance the pain and care requisite to the acquist and custody of them; a benefit indeed not proper to the Possessour, for any one may look on them as well as he, or on the like; any one at pleasure may enjoy better sights;

Eccles. 5. 11.

all

all the Riches and Ornaments of Nature, the glorious ſplendours of Heaven, and the ſweet beauties of the Field, are expoſed to common view; the choiceſt Magnificencies and Gallantries of the World, do ſtudiouſly preſent themſelves to every mans eye; theſe in part every man truly may appropriate to himſelf; and by imagination any man can as well take all that he ſees for his own, as the tenacious Miſer doth fancy his dear pelf to be his.

But mine Heir (perhaps he will further ſay) will thank me, will praiſe me, will bleſs me for my great care and providence: If he doth, what is that to thee? Nothing of that will concern thee, or can reach thee; thou ſhalt not hear what he ſays, or feel any good from what he does: And moſt probably thou art miſtaken in thy opinion concerning him; as thou *knoweſt not who* he ſhall be, Pſal. 39. 6.

that ſhall gather all thou heapeſt up, or *ſhall rule over all thy labour*, (*whether he ſhall be a wiſe man or a fool*, a kinſman or a ſtranger, a friend or a foe) ſo thou canſt as little gueſs what he will think or ſay: If he hath wit, he may ſweetly laugh at thee for thy fond wiſdom; if he hath none, his commendations will little adorn thy memory; he will to thy diſgrace ſpend what thou leaveſt, as vainly as thou didſt get or keep it. But (this to be ſure he will in the end ſay for himſelf) Money is a good reſerve againſt neceſſary occaſions, or bad times that may come; againſt the time of old age, of ſickneſs, of adverſity; 'tis the ſureſt friend a man can have in ſuch caſes, which, when all fails, will be ready to help him: *The rich mans Wealth is his ſtrong City*; the Wiſe-man he thinks never ſpake more wiſely; he therefore will not diſmantle this fortreſs, but

Eccleſ. 2. 19.

Prov. 10. 15.

but will keep it well ſtored, letting therefore his wealth lie dead and uſeleſs by him: but (to let paſs now the prophane infidelity of this plea, excluding all hope in God, and ſubſtituting our providence in the room of his) what a folly is it, thus to anticipate evil, and to create to our ſelves a preſent adverſity from a ſuſpition of one future; to pinch our ſelves now, leſt we ſhould ſuffer hereafter; to pine to day, becauſe we can imagine it poſſible that we may ſtarve to morrow; to forgo certain occaſions of enjoying our goods, for that perchance the like occaſions may happen one day, we know not when; not to uſe things now, when reaſon bids us, becauſe they may be uſeful at another time? Not conſidering alſo, that many intervenient accidents, more probably than a moderate and handſom uſe of our Wealth, may crop the excreſcencies thereof.

2. But ſetting aſide theſe abſurd excuſes of penuriouſneſs, we may conſider, that ſecluding the good uſe of them in beneficence, Riches are very impertinent, very cumberſom, very dangerous, very miſchievous things; either ſuperfluous toys, or troubleſome clogs, or treacherous ſnares, or rather all theſe in combination, productive of trouble, ſorrow, and ſin. A ſmall pittance will, and muſt ſuffice to all reaſonable purpoſes, to ſatisfie our neceſſities, to procure conveniencies, to yield innocent delight and eaſe: our nature doth not require, nor cannot bear much: (*Take heed and beware of covetouſneſs*, ſaith our Lord, *for a mans life conſiſteth not in the abundance of the things which he poſſeſſeth*; that is, a man may live well without it:) all the reſt, ſetting beneficence apart, can only ſerve vanity or vice, will make us really fools or ſlaves. (*They that will*

Luk 12. 15. 1 Tim. 6. 8. *Corporis exigua deſideria ſunt; frigus ſubmovere vult alimentis famem ac ſitim extinguere; quicquid extra concupiſcitur, vitiis, non uſibus laboratur.* Sen. Conſ. ad Helv. 9.

will be rich, (ſaith the Apoſtle) *fall into temptations and a ſnare, and into many fooliſh and hurtful luſts, which drown men into deſtruction and perdition.*) They puff up our minds with vain and falſe conceits; making us, as if we were in a dream or frenzy, to take our ſelves for other perſons, more great, more wiſe, more good, more happy than we are: for conſtantly, as the wiſe man obſerved, *The rich man is wiſe in his own conceit*; *Great men are not always wiſe.* And *Agur* thus intimates in his prayer, *Remove far from me vanity and lies, give me neither poverty nor riches*, They render us inſenſible and forgetful of God, of our ſelves, of piety and virtue, of all that is good and worthy of us: (*Leſt I be full*, ſaid that good man again, aſſigning a reaſon why he deprecated being rich, *and deny thee, and ſay, Who is the Lord?*) they ſwallow up our thoughts, our

1 Tim. 6. 9.

Prov. 28. 11.

Job. 32. 9.

Prov. 30. 8.

Prov. 30. 9.

our affections, our endeavours, our time and leiſure, poſſeſſing our hearts with a doting love unto them, (excluding other good affections) diſtracting our minds with anxious cares about them, (choaking other good thoughts) encumbring all our life with buſineſs about them, (inconſiſtent with due attention to our other more weighty and neceſſary concernments) filling our heads with ſuſpicions, and fears, piercing our hearts with troubles and ſorrows; they immerſe our ſouls in all the follies of pride, in all the filths of luxury, in all the miſchiefs emergent from ſloth and ſtupidity; they are *the root of all evils* unto us, and the greateſt obſtructions of our true happineſs, rendring Salvation almoſt impoſſible, and Heaven in a manner inacceſſible to us: ſo that to be rich, (if ſevered from a ſober mind, and a free heart) is a great diſeaſe, and the

Mat. 6. 24.
Eccleſ. 31. 1.
Mat. 13. 22.
Luk. 10. 41.
2 Tim. 2. 4.
1 Tim. 6. 10.
Jam. 5. 5.
Luk. 16. 19.
1 Tim. 6. 10.
Mat. 19. 23, 24.

the ſource of many grievous diſtempers both of body and mind; from which we cannot otherwiſe, well otherwiſe ſecure or reſcue our ſelves, than by liberally ſpending them in works of bounty and mercy: ſo ſhall we eaſe our ſelves of the burthens, ſo ſhall we elude the temptations, ſo ſhall we abandon the vices, and ſo ſhall we eſcape all the ſad miſchiefs incident to them: Thus to uſe wealth, ſhall turn it into a convenience, and an ornament of our lives, into a conſiderable bleſſing, and a ground of much comfort to us. Excluding this uſe of wealth, or abſtracting a capacity of doing good therewith, nothing is more pitiful and deſpicable than it; it is but like the load, or the trappings of an Aſs; a wiſe man on that condition would not chuſe it, or endure to be peſtered with it; but would ſerve it, as thoſe Philoſophers did, who flung it away, that

ἀποφόρτισαί τι τῆς ὑψὸς, ἵνα πλέης κουφότερος. Naz. Orat. 27.

it

it might not disturb their contemplations: 'tis the power it affords of benefiting men, which only can season, and ingratiate it to the relish of such a person; otherwise it is evidently true, which the Wise-man affirms, *Prov.* 15. 16. *Better is a little with the fear of the Lord, than great treasure, and trouble there-with.*

† μὴδὲ νόμιζε τῷ ἐλεημοσύνῃ ἀνάλυμα εἶναι, ἀλλὰ πρόσοδον, μηδὲ δαπάνην, ἀλλὰ πρᾶγματείαν, μείζω δὲ λαμβάνεις, ἢ δίδως. &c. Chryſ. T. 5. p. 208.

3. Again, we may consider, that to dispense our Wealth liberally, is the best way to preserve it, and to continue Masters thereof; what we give, is not thrown away, but saved from danger; † while we detain it at home, (as it seems to us) it really is abroad, and at adventures; it is out at Sea, sailing perilously in storms, near rocks and shelves, amongst Pirates; nor can it ever be safe, till it is brought into this port, or ensured this way; * when we have bestowed it on the poor, then we have lodged it in unquestionable safety; in a place where

*μὴ τοίνυν φείδωμεθα χρημάτων, μᾶλλον δὲ φειδώμεθα τῶν χρημάτων· ὁ δὲ φειδόμενος τῶν ὄντων εἰς τὰς τῶν πενήτων χεῖρας αὐτὰ ἐναποτίθεται, εἰς τὸν ἄσυλον θησαυρὸν καὶ λησταῖς καὶ οἰκέταις καὶ συκοφάνταις χαλεπὸν, καὶ πάσαις ἐφόδοις ἀνάλωτον. Chryſ. Tom. 5. Or. 55.

where no rapine, no deceipt, no miſhap, no corruption can ever by any means come at it. All our Doors and Bars, all our Forces and Guards, all the circumſpection and vigilancy we can uſe, are no defence or ſecurity at all in compariſon to this diſpoſal thereof: The poor man's ſtomack is a Granary for our Corn, which never can be exhauſted; the poor man's back is a Wardrope for our Cloathes, which never can be pillaged; the poor man's Pocket is a Bank for our Money, which never can diſappoint or deceive us; all the rich Traders in the World may decay and break, but the poor can never fail, except God himſelf turn Bankrupt; for what we give to the poor, we deliver and entruſt in his hands, out of which no force can wring it, no craft can filch it; it is laid up in Heaven, whither no thief can climb, where no moth or ruſt do abide.

Multi Sancti, & Sanctæ omnimodo cavent ipſas velut matres deliciarum divitias diſpergendo pauperibus abjecerunt, & tali modo in cœleſtibus theſauros tutius conſiderunt. *Aug. Ep.* 121.

abide. In despite of all the fortune, of all the might, of all the malice in the world, the liberal man will ever be rich; for God's Providence is his Estate; God's Wisdom and Power are his Defence; God's Love and Favour are his Reward; God's Word is his Assurance; who hath said it, that Prov. 28. 27. *He which giveth to the poor, shall not lack:* no vicissitude therefore of things can surprize him, or find him unfurnished; no disaster can impoverish him, no adversity can overwhelm him; he hath a certain reserve against all times and occasions: He that *deviseth liberal* Isa. 32. 8. *things, by liberal things shall he stand*, (saith the Prophet.) But on the other hand, being niggardly is the likeliest course we can take to lose our Wealth and Estate; we thereby expose them to danger, and leave them defenceless; we subject them to the envious eye, to the slanderous tongue, to the ravenous

ravenous and inſidious hand; we deprive them of Divine Protection, which if it be away, *The watchman waketh but in vain:* We provoke God irrecoverably to take it from us, as he did the Talent from that unprofitable ſervant, who did not uſe it well. We do indeed thereby yield God juſt cauſe of War, and enmity againſt us; which being, *Omnia dat qui juſta negat*; we do forfeit all to Divine Juſtice, by denying that portion which belongs to him, and which he claims. Can we hope to live in quiet poſſeſſion of any thing, if we refuſe to pay our due Tributes and Taxes impoſed upon us by our Almighty Soveraign; if we live in ſuch rebellion againſt his Authority, ſuch violation of his right, ſuch diffidence to his Word? No: *He that truſteth in his riches, ſhall fall, but the righteous ſhall flouriſh as a branch:* ſuch is the difference between the covetous

Pſal. 127. 1.

Prov. 11. 28.

covetous and the liberal in point of ſecurity and ſucceſs concerning their Eſtate.

Even according to the humane and ordinary way of eſteeming things, (abſtracting from the ſpecial Providence of God) the liberal perſon hath in conſequence of his bounty, more real ſecurity for his Wealth, than this World hath any other: He thereby gets an intereſt in the gratitude and affection of thoſe, whom he obligeth, together with the good will and reſpect of all men, who are ſpectators of his vertuous and generous dealing: the hearts and memories of men are repoſitories to him of a treaſure, which nothing can extort from him, or defraud him of. If any miſchance ſhould arrive, or any want come near him, all men would be ready to commiſerate him, every man would haſten to his ſuccour. As when a haughty, a greedy, or a gripple man do fall

fall into calamity or disgrace, scarce any one regardeth or pitieth him; Fortune deserting such a person, carries all with it, few or none stick to him, his most zealous flatterers are commonly the first that forsake him, contempt and neglect are the only adherents to his condition; that of the Wiseman appears verified, *He that hideth his eyes from the poor, shall have many a curse:* so the courteous and bountiful person, when Fortune seems to frown on him, hath a sure refuge in the good will and esteem of men; all men, upon the accompts of honour and honesty, take themselves to be concerned in his case, and engaged to favour him; even those, who before were strangers, become then his friends, and in effect discover their affection to him; it, in the common judgment of people, appears an indignity and a disgrace to mankind, that such a man should want or suffer.

Miraris cum tu argento post omnia ponas, Si nemo præstet quem non mereàris amorem. Hor. Serm. 1. 1.

Prov. 28. 27.

4. Nay farther we may consider, that exercising bounty is the most advantagious method of improving and increasing an Estate; but that being tenacious and illiberal, doth tend to the diminution and decay thereof. The way to obtain a great encrease, is to sow much: he that sows little, how can he expect a good Crop? It is as true in spiritual Husbandry, as in the other; that *what a man soweth that he shall reap*, both in kind, and according to proportion: So that great Husband-man St. *Paul* assureth us, *He that soweth sparingly, shall reap sparingly; but he that soweth bountifully, shall also reap bountifully*: and *Solomon* means the same, when he saith, *To him that soweth righteousness, shall be a sure reward*. The way to gain abundantly is, you know well, to trade boldly; he that will not adventure any thing considerable, how can he think of a large return?

Gal. 6. 7, 8.

2 Cor. 9. 6, 10.

Prov. 11. 18.

return? *Honour the Lord with thy ſubſtance, ſo ſhall thy Barns be filled with plenty, and thy Preſſes ſhall burſt out with new wine,* Prov. 3. 9, 10. 'Tis ſo likewiſe in the Evangelical Negotiations; if we put out much upon ſcore of Conſcience or Charity, we ſhall be ſure to profit much. Liberality is the moſt beneficial Trafick that can be; it is bringing our Wares to the beſt Market; it is letting out our Money into the beſt hands; we thereby lend our Money to God, who repays with vaſt Uſury; an hundred to one is the rate he allows at preſent, and above a hundred millions to one he will render hereafter; ſo that if you will be Merchants this way, you ſhall be ſure to thrive, you cannot fail to grow rich moſt eaſily and ſpeedily: *The liberal ſoul ſhall be made fat, and he that watereth ſhall be watered himſelf:* This is that which St. *Paul* again argues upon, Prov. 11. 25.

when commending the *Philippians* free kindneſs toward him, he ſays, Phil. 4. 17. *Not becauſe I deſire a gift, but I deſire fruit that may abound to your accompt.* Bounty yields καρπὸν πλεονάζοντα, a fruit that multiplies and abundantly turns to good accompt; it indeed procuring God's benediction, the fountain of all deſirable plenty and proſperity: Prov. 10. 22. for, *The bleſſing of the Lord it maketh rich, and he addeth no ſorrow with it.* It is therefore the greateſt want of policy, the worſt ill-husbandry and unthriftineſs that can be, to be ſparing this way; he that uſeth it, cannot be thriving; he muſt ſpend upon the main ſtock, and may be ſure to get nothing conſiderable, God ordinarily ſo proceeds, as to recompence and retaliate men in the ſame kind, wherein they endeavour to pleaſe him, or preſume to offend him; ſo that for them who freely offer him their goods, he in regard thereto

thereto will proſper their dealings, and bleſs their eſtates: (*For this very thing the Lord thy God ſhall bleſs thee in all thy works, and in all that thou putteſt thine hand unto,* ſays *Moſes*) but they who will not lay out any thing for him, he will not concern himſelf in their ſucceſs otherwiſe than to croſs it, or (which is worſe) to curſe it: for if he ſeem to favour them for a time with ſome proſperity in their affairs, their condition is much worſe thereby, their accompt will be more grievous, and their fate more diſaſtrous in the end. Deut. 15. 10. Pſal. 73. 17.

5. Further, the contributing part of our goods to the poor, will qualifie us to enjoy the reſt with ſatisfaction and comfort: The Oblation of theſe Firſt-fruits, as it will ſanctifie the whole lump of our Eſtate, ſo it will ſweeten it; having offered this well-pleaſing ſacrifice of piety, having diſcharged this debt of juſtice, having

paid this tribute of gratitude, our hearts being at reſt, and our conſcience well ſatisfied, we ſhall, like thoſe good people in the Acts; *eat our meat with gladneſs, and ſingleneſs of heart*; to ſee the poor man by our means accommodated, eaſed, and refreſhed, will give a delicious reliſh to all our enjoyments. But withholding his portion from the poor, as it will pollute and profane all our Eſtate, ſo it will render the fruition thereof ſowre or unſavoury to us: for can we with any content taſte our dainties, or view our plenties, while the poor man ſtands in ſight pining with hunger? Can we without regret ſee our Walls cloathed with Tapeſtry, our Horſes deckt with Golden Trappings, our Attendants ſtrutting in wanton Gaiety, while our honeſt poor Brother appears half naked, and trembling with cold? Can we carry on one finger enough to furniſh

Acts 2. 46.

ἐγγὺς ὁ πένης, εἰς τοῦτον ἀπέρευξαί τι τῶν περιττῶν, τί καὶ σὺ κάμνεις ἀπεπτῶν, καὶ οὗτος πεινῶν, καὶ σὺ κραιπαλῶν καὶ οὗτος ὑδεριῶν, καὶ σὺ καρῳβαρύνων, καὶ οὗτος περιτρεπόμενος νόσῳ; Naz. Orat. 27.

niſh ten poor people with neceſſaries, and have the heart within us, without ſhame and diſpleaſure, to ſee them want? No; the ſenſe of our impiety and ingratitude toward God, of our inhumanity and unworthineſs toward our Neighbour, will not fail (if ever we conſiderately reflect on our behaviour) to ſting us with cruel remorſe and ſelf-condemnation; the clamours of want and miſery ſurrounding us, will pierce our ears, and wound our hearts; the frequent objects of pity and mercy, do what we can to baniſh them from our proſpect or regard, will ſo aſſail, and ſo purſue us, as to diſturb the freedom of our enjoyments, to quaſh the briskneſs of our mirth, to allay the ſweetneſs of our pleaſure; yea rather, if ſtupidity and obduration have not ſeized on us, to imbitter all unto us; we ſhall feel that true, which *Zophar* ſpeaks of the cruel and covetous

vetous Oppreſſour, *Surely he ſhall not feel quietneſs in his belly,—he ſhall not rejoyce in his ſubſtance,—in the fullneſs of his ſufficiency he ſhall be in ſtraits.*

Job. 20.18,20, 22.

6. I ſhall touch but one conſideration more, perſwaſive of this practice; it is this: The peculiar nature of our Religion ſpecially requires it, and the honour thereof exacts it from us; nothing better ſuits Chriſtianity, nothing more graces it, than Liberality; nothing is more inconſiſtent therewith, or more diſparageth it, than being miſerable and ſordid. A Chriſtian Niggard is the verieſt nonſenſe that can be; for, What is a Chriſtian? What but a man, who adores God alone, who loves God above all things, who repoſes all his truſt and confidence in God? What is he, but one who undertaketh to imitate the moſt good and bountiful God, to follow, as the beſt pattern of his practice, the

the moſt benign and charitable JESUS, the Son of God; to obey the Laws of God, and his Chriſt, the ſum and ſubſtance of which is Charity; half whoſe Religion doth conſiſt in loving his Neighbour as himſelf? What is he further, but one who hath renounced this world, with all the vain pomps and pleaſures of it; who profeſſes himſelf in diſpoſition and affection of mind to forſake all things for Chriſt's ſake; who pretends little to value, affect, or care for any thing under Heaven; having all his main concernments and treaſures, his heart, his hopes, and his happineſs in another world? ſuch is a Chriſtian; and what is a Niggard? All things quite contrary: One whoſe practice manifeſtly ſhews him to worſhip another thing beſide, and before God; to love Mammon above God, and more to confide in it, than in him; One who bears

ſmall

ſmall good will, kindneſs or pity toward his Brother; who is little affected or concerned with things future or celeſtial; whoſe mind and heart are rivited to this world; whoſe hopes and happineſſes are ſetled here below; whoſe ſoul is deeply immerſed and buried in earth: One who, according to conſtant habit, notoriouſly breaketh the two great heads of Chriſtian duty, *Loving God with all his heart, and his Neighbour as himſelf:* It is therefore, by comparing thoſe things, very plain, that we pretend to reconcile groſs contradictions and inconſiſtencies, if we profeſs our ſelves to be Chriſtians, and are illiberal. It is indeed the ſpecial grace and glory of our Religion, that it conſiſteth not in barren ſpeculations, or empty formalities, or forward profeſſions; not in fancying curiouſly, or ſpeaking zealouſly, or looking demurely; but in really producing ſenſible fruits

fruits of goodneſs; in doing (as St. *Paul* ſignifies) *things good and profitable unto men*, ſuch as thoſe chiefly are of which we ſpeak. The moſt gracious wiſdom of God hath ſo modelled our Religion, that according to it Piety and Charity are the ſame thing; that we can never expreſs our ſelves more dutiful toward him, or better pleaſe him, or more truly glorifie him, than when we are kind and good to our poor Brother. We groſly miſtake, if we take giving of Alms to be a Jewiſh or Popiſh practice, ſuitable to Children and Dullards in Religion, beneath ſo refined, ſo improved, ſo loftily ſpiritual Gallants as we: No, 'tis a duty moſt properly, and moſt highly Chriſtian, as none more, a moſt goodly fruit of Grace, and a moſt faithful mark thereof: *By the experiment of this miniſtration, we* (as St. *Paul* ſaith) *glorifie God for our profeſſed ſubjection unto the Goſpel* Tit. 3. 8. 2 Cor. 9. 13.

of

of Christ, and for our liberal distribution unto our brethren and unto all men: without it our faith is dead and senseless; our high attainments are found presumptions; our fine notions and delicate spiritualities are in truth but silly dreams, the issues of a proud and ignorant fancy: he that appears hard-hearted and close-fisted towards his needy Brother, let him think or call himself what he pleaseth, he plainly is no Christian, but a blemish, a reproach, and a scandal to that honourable Name.

7. To all these Considerations and Reasons inducing to the practice of this kind of Charity, I might subjoyn examples, and set before you the fairest Copies that can be imagined thereof. We have for it the pattern of God himself, who is infinitely munificent and merciful; *from whom every good and perfect gift descendeth; who giveth*

Jam. 1. 5, 17. Act. 17. 25.

giveth life, and breath, and all things unto all; who *giveth liberally and upbraideth not*. We have the example of the Son of God, who 2 Cor. 8. 9.
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all his life in painful diſpenſation of beneficence, and relieving the needs of men in every kind. We have the bleſſed Patriarchs to follow, who at God's pleaſure and call did readily leave their Country, their Friends, their Goods, and all they had. We have the practice of the holy Apoſtles, who freely *let go all to follow their* Mat. 19. 27.
Lord; who chearfully ſuſtained all ſorts of loſſes, diſgraces and pains, for promoting the honour of God, and procuring good unto men;

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2 Cor. 8. 9.

Act. 10. 38.

Mat. 19. 27.

we have to move and encourage us hereto the first and best Christians, most full of grace and holy zeal, who *so many as were possessours of lands and houses, did sell them,* and did impart the price of them to the community, *so that there was none poor among them,* and that *distribution was made to every one as he had need.* We have all the saints and eminent servants of God in all times, who have been high and wonderful in the performance of these duties, (I could tell you of the blessed Martyr St. *Cyprian,* who was liberal by whole-sale, bestowing all at once, a fair Estate, on God and the poor; of the renowned Bishop St. *Basil,* who constantly waited on the sick, and kissed their sores; of the most pious Confessour St. *Martin,* who having but one Coat left, and seeing a poor man that wanted cloaths, tore it in two pieces, and gave one to that *poor man*; and many like instances

Act. 4. 34, 35.

Pontius in vit. Cypr.

Greg. Naz. Orat. 40.

Sulp. Severus.

inſtances out of authentick Hiſtory might be produced, apt to provoke our imitation: I might alſo, to beget emulation and ſhame in us, repreſent exemplary practices of Humanity and Charity even in Jews, Mahometans and Pagans, (ſuch as in theſe cold days might paſs for more than ordinary among us) but I ſhall only propound one preſent and ſenſible example, that of this Noble City, whoſe publick bounty and charity in all kinds, (in education of Orphans, in curing the Diſeaſed both in body and mind, in proviſion for the poor, in relieving all ſorts of neceſſities and miſeries) let me earneſtly intreat and exhort us all for God's ſake, as we are able, by our private charity to imitate, to encourage, and to aſſiſt; let us do this ſo much the more willingly and freely, as the ſad circumſtances of things, by God's judgments brought upon us, do plainly

ly require, that the Publick Charity it self (lying under so great impediments, discouragements and distresses) should be supported, supplied, and relieved by particular liberality. No words that I can devise will be so apt to affect and move you, as the case it self, if you please to consider it: hear it therefore speaking, and, I pray, with a pious and charitable disposition of mind attend thereto:

A true Report, &c.

For this excellent Pattern of pious bounty and mercy, let us heartily thank Almighty God; let us humbly implore God's blessing on the future management of it; let us pay due respects to the worthy Promoters thereof, and pray for rewards upon them answerable to their charitable care and industry employed therein; let us also according to our ability per-

perform our duty in following and furthering it: for encouragement to which practice, give me leave briefly to reflect upon the latter part of my Text; which represents some instances of the felicity proper to a bountiful person, or some rewards peculiar to the exercising the duties of bounty and mercy.

The first is, *His righteousness endureth for ever.* These words are capable of various senses, or of divers respects; they may import that the fame and remembrance of his bounty is very durable, or that the effects thereof do lastingly continue, or that eternal rewards are designed thereto; they may respect the bountiful man himself, or his posterity here; they may simply relate to an endurance in God's regard and care; or they may with that also comprehend a continuance in the good memory, and honourable mention

of men. Now in truth according to all theſe interpretations, the bountiful man's righteouſneſs doth endure for ever, that is, very laſtingly (or ſo long as the ſpecial nature of the caſe doth bear) in any ſenſe; or for an abſolute perpetuity in ſome ſenſe: the words in their plenitude do naturally and without ſtraining involve ſo many truths, none which therefore we think fit to exclude, but ſhall briefly touch them all.

1. As for future reputation and fame, (which that it in part is intended here, that which precedes, *The righteous ſhall be had in everlaſting remembrance*, doth argue) it is evident, that it peculiarly attends upon this practice: the bountiful perſon is eſpecially that *juſt* man, whoſe *memory is bleſſed*, (is μετ' ἐπαινων, as the Greek renders it; that is, is proſecuted with commendations and praiſes.) No Spices can ſo embalm a man,

Prov. 10. 7.

no

no Monument can ſo preſerve his Name and Memory, as works of Beneficence; no other fame is comparably ſo precious, or truly glorious, as that which grows from thence. The Renown of Power and Proweſs, of Wit or Learning, of any Wiſdom or Skill, may dwell in the fancies of men with ſome admiration; but the remembrance of Bounty reigns in their hearts with cordial eſteem and affection; there erecting immoveable Trophies over Death and Oblivion, and it thence ſpreading it ſelf through the tongues of men with ſincere and ſprightly Commendations. The bountiful man's very Duſt is fragrant, and his Grave venerable; his Name is never mentioned without reſpect; his Actions have always theſe beſt Ecchoes, with innumerable iterations reſounding after them: *His goods ſhall be eſtabliſhed, and the Congregation ſhall*

declare his Almes. Eccles. 32.11. This was a true Friend to Mankind; This was a real Benefactour to the World; This was a Man good in earnest, and pious to good purpose.

2. The effects of his righteousnes are likewise very durable: When he is departed hence, and in person is no more seen, he remains visible and sensible in the footsteps and fruits of his goodnes; the Poor still beholds him present in the subsistence of himself, and his Family; the Sickman feels him in the refreshment, which he yet enjoys by his provision; he supervives in the heart of the Afflicted, which still resents the comfort, and rejoyces in the ease which he procured him; all the World perceives benefit from him by the edification it receiveth from his example; Religion obtaineth profit and ornament, God himself enjoyeth glory and praise

praiſe from his righteouſnes.

3. His righteouſneſs alſo endureth in reſpect to his poſterity. It is an uſual plea for tenacity and parſimony, that care muſt be had of poſterity, that enough muſt be provided and laid up for the Family: But in truth this is a very abſurd excuſe, and doing according thereto, is a very prepoſterous method of proceeeding toward that end; it is really the greateſt improvidence in that reſpect, and the trueſt neglect that can be of our Children: for ſo doing, together with a ſeeming Eſtate, we entail a real Curſe upon them; we deveſt them of God's protection and benediction, (the only ſure preſervatives of an Eſtate) we leave them Heirs of nothing ſo much as of puniſhments due to our ingratitude, our infidelity, our impiety and injuſtice both toward God and man: whereas by liberally beſtowing on

the poor, we demiſe unto them Gods bleſſing, which is the beſt inheritance; we recommend them to Gods ſpecial care, which is the beſt tuition; we leave them Gods protection and providence, which are a Wealth indefectible and inexhauſtible; we conſtitute God their Guardian, who will moſt faithfully manage, and moſt wiſely improve their ſubſtance, both that which we leave to them, and that which we gave for them to the poor; we thereby in good part entitle them to the rewards appropriate to our pious Charity, our Faith, our Gratitude, our Self-denial, our Juſtice, to whatever of good is virtually contained in our acts of bounty; to omit the honour and good will of men, which conſtantly adhere to the bountiful man's Houſe and Family. *Prov.* 13. 22. *A good man leaveth an inheritance to his childrens children.* It is therefore expreſly

preſly mentioned in Scripture as a recompence peculiar to this vertue, that ſecurity from want, and all happineſs do attend the poſterity of the bountiful perſon: *He is ever merciful and lendeth, and his ſeed is bleſſed*, ſaith *David* of him generally; and *David* alſo particularly obſerved, that in all the courſe of his long life, he could find no exception to the Rule: *I have been young, and now am old, yet have I not ſeen the righteous forſaken, nor his ſeed begging their bread.* Pſal. 37. 25, 26. Pſal. 112. 2, 3.

4. His righteouſneſs alſo endureth for ever in the perpetual favour of God, and in the eternal rewards which God will confer upon him, who out of Conſcience and Reverence toward God, out of good will and kindneſs toward his Brother hath diſperſed, and given to the poor. *God will not* (as the Apoſtle ſaith) *be unjuſt to forget his labour of charity in miniſtring* Heb. 6. 10.

to his poor Brother: from the ſeed
Gal. 6. 8. which he *hath ſown to the Spirit*, he ſhall aſſuredly reap a moſt plentiful Crop of Bleſſings ſpiritual;
1 Tim. 6. 19. he ſhall effectually enjoy *the good foundation* that he hath *ſtored up*: for the goods he hath ſold and delivered, he ſhall *bonâ fide* receive
Mat. 13. 46. his Bargan, *the hidden treaſure*, and *precious pearl* of eternal life; for this beſt improvement of his Talent of worldly Riches, he ſhall
Mat. 25. 21, 26. hear the *Euge bone ſerve, Well done good and faithful ſervant, enter into thy Maſters joy*: he ſhall at laſt find God infinitely more bountiful to him, than he hath been unto the poor.

Thus when all the flaſhes of ſenſual pleaſure are quite extinct; when all the flowers of ſecular glory are withered away; when all earthly Treaſures are buried in darkneſs; when this world, and all the faſhion of it, are utterly vaniſhed and gone, the bountiful

mans

mans ſtate will be ſtill firm and flouriſhing, and *His righteouſneſs ſhall endure for ever.*

It follows, *His horn ſhall be exalted with honour:* A Horn is an Emblem of Power; for in it the Beaſts ſtrength, offenſive and defenſive, doth conſiſt; and of Plenty, for it hath within it a capacity apt to contain what is put into it; and of Sanctity, for that in it was put the holy Oyl, with which Kings were Conſecrated; and of Dignity, both in conſequence upon the reaſons mentioned, (as denoting might, and influence, and ſacredneſs accompanying Soveraign Dignity) and becauſe alſo it is an eſpecial beauty and ornament to the Creature which hath it; ſo that this expreſſion (*His Horn ſhall be exalted with honour*) may be ſuppoſed to import, that an abundance of high, and holy, of firm and ſolid honour ſhall attend upon the bountiful perſon. And

1 Sam. 16. 13. 1 King 1. 39.

that

that ſo it truly ſhall, may from many conſiderations appear.

1. Honour is inſeparably annexed thereto as its natural Companion and ſhadow. God hath impreſſed upon all Vertue a Majeſty and a Beauty, which do command reſpect, and with a kindly violence extort Veneration from men; ſuch is the natural Conſtitution of our Souls, that as our ſenſe neceſſarily liketh what is fair and ſweet, ſo our mind unavoidably will eſteem what is vertuous and worthy; all good Actions as ſuch, are honourable, but of all Vertues Beneficence doth with moſt unqueſtionable right claim honour, and with irreſiſtible force procures it; as it is indeed the moſt divine of Vertues, ſo men are moſt apt to venerate them, whom they obſerve eminently to practiſe it. Other Vertues men ſee, and approve as goodly to the ſight, but this they taſte and feel; this by moſt

Φιλοῦν τοι σχεδὸν μάλιστα οἱ ἐλευθέστεοι τῶν ἐπ' ἀρετῆς. ὠφέλιμοι γὰρ. Ariſt.

most sensible experience they find to be pleasant and profitable, and cannot therefore but highly prize it. They, who *do their alms before men*, although out of an unworthy vain glorious design, *have* yet, as our Saviour intimates, *their reward*; they fail not to get Honour thereby; and even so have no bad penny-worth: for, in the Wisemans judgment, *A good name is rather to be chosen than great riches*, they receive at least fine air for gross earth; and things very spiritual, for things most material; they obtain that which every man doth naturally desire and prize, for that which only fashion in some places endeareth, and commandeth: they get the end for the means, for scarce any man seeketh wealth for it self, but either for Honour, or for Vertues sake, that he may live creditably, or may do good therewith: Necessity is served with a little, Pleasure may be satisfied

Mat. 6. 1.

Prov. 21. 21.

Αἱ γὰρ δυναστεί-
αι καὶ ὁ πλοῦτος
διὰ τὴν τιμήν
ἐστιν αἱρετά.
Arist.

ſatisfied with a Competence; Abundance is required only to ſupport Honour, or promote good; and Honour by a natural connexion adhereth to Bounty. *He that followeth after righteouſneſs and mercy, findeth life, righteouſneſs, and honour*, Prov. 21. 21.

2. But further, an acceſſion of Honour according to gracious promiſe, (grounded upon ſomewhat of ſpecial reaſon, of equity, and decency in the thing it ſelf) is due from God unto the bountiful perſon, and is by ſpecial providence ſurely conferred on him. There is no kind of piety, or inſtance of obedience, whereby God himſelf is more ſignally honoured, than by this. Theſe are chiefly thoſe *good works*, the which *men ſeeing*, are apt to *glorifie our Father which is in Heaven*; Phil. 1. 11. *Being filled with the fruits of righteouſneſs, which are by Chriſt Jeſus, to the glory, and praiſe of God.*

Mat. 5 16.

God. To theſe fruits that is moſt applicable, which our Lord ſaith, *Hereby is my Father glorified, if you bear much fruit:* for, as, *He that oppreſſeth the poor, reproacheth his Maker;* ſo *he honoureth him, that hath mercy on the poor.* The comfortable experience of good in this ſort of actions, will moſt readily diſpoſe men to admire and commend the excellency, the wiſdom, the goodneſs of the Divine Laws, will therefore procure God hearty praiſe, and thanks for them: For, as St. *Paul* teacheth us, *The adminiſtration of this ſervice not only ſupplyeth the want of the Saints, but is abundant alſo by many thankſgivings unto God; whilſt by experiment of this miniſtration, they glorifie God for your profeſſed ſubjection unto the Goſpel of Chriſt, and for your liberal diſtribution unto them, and unto all men.* Since then God is ſo peculiarly honoured by this practice, it is but equal and fit, that

Joh. 15. 8.
Prov. 14. 31.
2 Cor. 9. 11, 12, 13.

that God ſhould remunerate it with honour; Gods noble goodneſs will not let him ſeem defective in any ſort of beneficial correſpondence toward us, we ſhall never be able to yield him any kind of good thing in duty, which he will not be more apt to render us in Grace; they who (as *Solomon* ſpeaketh) *honour God with their ſubſtance*, ſhall by God certainly be honoured with his bleſſing: Reaſon intimates ſo much, and we beſide have Gods expreſs Word for it; *Them* (ſaith he) *who honour me, I will honour*. He that abſolutely and independantly is the Fountain of all Honour; *from whom* (as good King *David* ſaith) *riches and honour cometh*, for that *he reigneth over all*, he will aſſuredly prefer and dignifie thoſe, who have been at ſpecial care and coſt to advance his Honour. He that hath the *hearts of all men in his hands*, and *faſhioneth them* as he

Prov. 3. 9.

1 Sam. 2. 30.

1 Chro. 29. 12.

Prov. 21. 1.
Pſal. 33. 15.

he pleaſeth, will raiſe the bountiful man in the judgments and affections of men. He that ordereth all the events of things, and diſpoſeth ſucceſs as he thinks fit, will cauſe the bountiful perſons Enterprizes to proſper, and come off with credit. He will not ſuffer the reputation of ſo real an Honourer of himſelf to be extreamly ſlurr'd by diſaſter, to be blaſted by ſlander, to be ſupplanted by envy or malice; but will *bring forth his righteouſneſs as the light, and his judgment as the noon-day.* Pſal. 37. 6.

3. God will thus exalt the bountiful Man's Horn even here in this World, and to an infinitely higher pitch he will advance it in the future ſtate: He ſhall there be ſet at the right-hand, in a moſt honourable place and rank; among the chief Friends and Favourites of the Heavenly King; in happy Conſortſhip with the holy Angels, and bleſſed Saints; where, in recompence

compence of his pious Bounty, he ſhall from the bountiful hands of his moſt gracious Lord receive *an incorruptible Crown of Righteouſneſs*, and *and an unfading Crown of Glory*: The which God of his infinite mercy grant unto us all, through Jeſus Chriſt our Lord; to whom for ever be all praiſe. *AMEN.*

Heb. 13. 20. *Now the God of peace, that brought again from the dead our Lord Jeſus, that great Shepherd of the ſheep, through the Blood of the Everlaſting Covenant, make us perfect in every good Work to do his Will, working in us that which is well-pleaſing in his ſight, through Jeſus Chriſt: to whom be Glory for ever and ever.* AMEN.

ADVERTISEMENT.

A Sermon on the *Paſſion of our Bleſſed Saviour*; Preached before the *Lord Mayor* at *Guild-hall Chappel*, on Good-Friday, 1677.

FINIS.